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A qualitative exploration of student perceptions of peer collaboration through the medium of online short story writing among Turkish public high school EFL learners in a social media environment

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Awarding institution:
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**A qualitative exploration of student perceptions of
peer collaboration through the medium of
online short story writing among Turkish public
high school EFL learners in a social media environment**

Hasan Selcuk

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
PhD degree at King's College London**

School of Social Science and Public Policy

Department of Education and Professional Studies

King's College London

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Abstract

This thesis is about the perceptions of Turkish EFL high school students on peer collaboration. It is contextualized within a study about how to encourage EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to improve their writing skills in English with peers in an online short story writing exercise. Focusing on two central aspects, I first examined EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration in the activity and then investigated these learners' perceptions regarding the impact of their peer collaboration on their writing development.

I used an exploratory, qualitative research approach. A pilot study impacted on my main study in determining sample size, shaping the research questions and framing focus group discussions. In the main study, two groups of three students, 16-year-old EFL learners at A2 level English proficiency (CEFR), undertook an online collaborative English short story writing exercise over seven weeks using Facebook. I gathered data from focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats and online discussion threads from both groups.

It emerged that three types of peer collaboration were engaged in during their story writing activity. The first was 'collectively contributing', which occurred in the editing and peer feedback stages of the writing exercise. The second was 'peer leadership', which was evident at the beginning and in the middle of the writing exercise, where the participants were initially dependent on the elected group leaders, but they subsequently became increasingly independent. The third pertained to 'peer affective' factors, which were found throughout the writing exercise, being concerned with receiving / giving praise and motivational phrases, the use of informal language and humour in writing during the exercise as well as in relation to feeling comfortable with each other. The participants claimed that peer collaboration had positive impacts on their writing development and on their self-confidence in writing English. Moreover, they reported that the group leaders' feedback was instructional and motivating. Group leaders, however, reported less benefit in terms of their own writing development, although the activity inspired them to want to teach.

This study unique in its focus on Facebook groups, contributes to the knowledge about improving high school secondary EFL learners' writing through collaborative activity and hence, the findings indicate there should be an updating of EFL teaching methods in Turkey.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is about the perceptions of Turkish EFL high school students on peer collaboration. I use the term ‘perception’ in this thesis as:

“ a physical and intellectual ability used in mental processes to recognise, interpret and understand events, intuitive cognition or judgment; a way to express a particular opinion or belief as a result of realising or noticing things which may not be obvious to others; insight, awareness, discernment, recognition, a set of understandings, interpretations and a way of knowing” (Silva, 2005:2).

It is Silva’s (2005) definition of perception I find most aptly captures the understanding of students of this study. This study is set within a context of the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Specifically, the aim is to explore how to encourage EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to improve their writing skills in English through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise. To address this, I investigated two groups of three EFL learners’ interpretations of peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise and explored their perceptions on the impacts of their peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity. This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis. I first provide background information and explain my motivation for this research study. Then, I present the context, the focus of the research, the aim and the research questions. I highlight the potential significance of the work and define my use of terms. Finally, I conclude the chapter with an outline of the thesis.

1.2 Background to the study

The skill of writing in an EFL classroom, similar to the other three macro-skills (listening, speaking and reading), has always served as a constituent part in the English Language Teaching (ELT) syllabus (Harmer, 2004). Nevertheless, as claimed by some of

the EFL writing researchers (Byrne, 1988; Hyland, 2003; Hedge, 2005), writing in an EFL classroom tends to be the ‘Cinderella’ of the four skills (at least at the lower levels) and is often relegated to the end of the teaching unit. Moreover, it is used mainly for homework by the teachers due to such factors as time constraints and the requirements regarding curriculum coverage. For these reasons, as argued by Hedge (2005), learners often see writing as of secondary importance and hence, fail to put in the necessary effort to improve their writing skills in the target language.

Aydin & Bazsoz (2010) argued that EFL learners in Turkish public high schools, where they encounter English for just a few hours in a week, are often unable to enhance their writing skills due to inadequate writing instruction, exam-oriented classrooms, grammar- / reading-based textbooks and teachers’ attitudes towards these skills. Against this backdrop, I was motivated to carry out this investigation in order to identify ways to improve this situation. To approach this matter, I designed a collaborative short story writing activity to be undertaken outside the classroom, on an online social networking platform, namely, a Facebook (FB) group, with the intention of encouraging a sample of EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to enhance their writing skills collaboratively.

There are two underlying reasons why I chose to undertake my study outside the classroom setting, namely, through the FB group. First, as discussed above, the study emerged from a problem that writing skills seem not to have received enough attention in English language lessons in many Turkish public high schools. EFL teachers in these schools need to abide by the English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum required by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (henceforth: the Turkish MONE) (2011) and have little time to spare for extended writing activities or for classroom research. This evident lack stimulated the idea of planning an online collaborative writing activity. Second, I was aware that Turkish teenagers are attracted to FB as a social networking site (SNS), so I decided to exercise my pedagogy in the aforementioned groups as I believed this would engage their interest. Whilst FB is a virtual space where people of similar interests gather to communicate, share pictures or videos as well as discussing ideas with others (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008), it can also be adapted and used for informal language learning and practice purposes with like-minded peers. A handful of studies in EFL/ESL learning contexts have shown that

SNSs have a great potential to enhance learners' learning performance, strengthen their motivation and foster collaboration as well as autonomy in learning (Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Pasfield-Neofitou, 2011). In short, the FB group employed during the study was used as a setting where EFL learners could communicate, work and produce short stories in English collaboratively.

There are three underlying reasons why I chose short story writing for the collaborative writing activity in this research. The first is that short story writing is considered as creative writing and I felt that this would be attractive to the participants. Creative writing is often referred to as "the production of texts which have an aesthetic rather than a purely informative, instrumental or pragmatic purposes" (Maley, 2009:5).

Regarding EFL writing contexts, creative writing usually suggests imaginative activities, such as writing: poetry, song lyrics, stories or plays (Harmer, 2001; Hedge, 2005). It has been argued that it is an effective way of exploring the target language in a playful and experimental way (Bräuer, 1997). Moreover, according to Ur (1996), it has motivational potential for learners. Likewise, some extant studies on creative writing in EFL contexts (e.g. Dougherty, 2010; Al-Jarf, 2007, 2012) have also contended that creative writing can be used as a tool to stimulate learners' interest and motivation in learning and writing development. Second, the Turkish MONE (2011:11) has advised EFL teachers covering the secondary school level ELT curriculum that, "creative writing activities can be employed to make the writing skill more enjoyable for students." Third, very few studies have integrated creative writing tasks with collaborative writing. One such study by Chao & Lo (2011) employed a story script writing task in a collaborative writing exercise in an EFL context. Other studies on collaborative writing in an EFL context, as presented in Chapter 2 (see Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4), used dictogloss writing tasks (e.g. Garcia Mayo, 2002 ; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002), meaning-related writing tasks, such as argumentative, informative, decision-making, narration, exposition and argumentation (e.g. Li & Zhu, 2013 ; Aydin & Yildiz, 2014), composition writing tasks on a given topic (e.g. Lund, 2008 ; Lin & Yang, 2011 ; Storch & Aldosari, 2013) paragraph writing tasks (e.g. Shehadeh, 2011), reflections on a discussion topic (e.g. Kessler, 2009 ; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010), text construction tasks (e.g. Garcia Mayo, 2002), and free writing tasks (e.g. Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010). Shaw (2013:22) writes that the short story 'is a genre that has lent itself to continuous

experimentation and to playfulness' that leaves writers 'free to cultivate diversity in an uninhibited way (ibid.). With respect to the discussion above and convinced that the short story would provide an apt vehicle for collaborative text –co-construction in the way Shaw describes, I planned to integrate a short story writing task with collaboration, because I considered this type of writing task as a tool capable of stimulating EFL learners' interest and motivation to enhance their writing skills in English. Furthermore, I also asked the participants what sort of writing they would like to do and they suggested a short story as they thought this would be fun.

There are three major approaches towards EFL writing instruction: (1) product-oriented, (2) process-oriented and (3) genre-oriented, according to Badger & White (2000). Among these three, I chose to adopt the process-oriented approach in the application of the intervention because this considers writing as being student-centred. As described by Kern (2000), the process-oriented approach involves planning, writing and several revisions, with students being encouraged to be autonomous and engage in peer collaboration during the process of writing. As also indicated by Kern (2000), the role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate learners during the writing process rather than insisting that a particular model of texts is followed. According to Hyland & Hyland (2006), previous studies that have adopted the process-oriented approach to EFL writing instruction have often characterised peer collaboration as 'peer-feedback' (e.g. Leki, 1990; Miao, Badger & Zhen, 2006; Min, 2006; Kamimura, 2006; Hong, 2006; Ware and Warschauer, 2006; Kurt & Atay, 2007; Lee, 2010; Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015). However, recently there has been a burgeoning literature on 'collaborative writing' (e.g. Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Garcia Mayo, 2002; Lund, 2008; Kessler, 2009; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Shehadeh, 2011; Chao & Lo, 2011; Lin & Yang, 2011; Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Li & Zhu, 2013; Aydin & Yildiz, 2014) all of which has highlighted a type of peer collaboration which falls under the process- oriented approach classification in the field of EFL writing research. As explained in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.1), Storch (2011) has pointed out that collaborative writing has been used commonly in an L1 context, such as on university courses. However, in the L2 context, including for EFL, the use of collaborative writing is largely absent. To address this, I have chosen to apply the collaborative writing model in the present study within the context of online short story writing to investigate the following two central aspects: first, to examine EFL learners' perceptions of peer collaboration in an online short story

writing exercise and second, to investigate these learners' perceptions regarding the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing exercise. I do not analyse the writing per se in this particular study, but rather, focus on the students' perceptions as to whether they believed collaborative writing supported their writing skills and, if so, how this was the case according to their perceptions.

1.3 My motivation for the study

The impetus for the present study came from the experiences of a study I undertook for my MA dissertation, which in essence laid the foundation for the current. The dissertation was about encouraging peer feedback in online EFL writing and was designed as an exploratory study lasting six weeks. It involved an FB group under the name of the 'Writing Club'. I, as the researcher, recruited ten of my FB friends (aged between 25 and 40 years old - six female and four male), who had learnt intensive English at high school level and/or studied on English medium level programmes at university in Turkey and were at the time working as professionals, but using a little English at work and / or in their daily lives. In brief, the study involved ten of my FB friends who sought both to improve their EFL writing and reading skills, in an enjoyable setting. My role in the research was that of facilitator.

Before conducting the study, I discussed with the participants what type of writing the club could involve. They brainstormed and came up with some creative writing topics, for example, they wanted to write poems, song lyrics and short stories. During the period of weeks 1 to 6, they decided on their creative writing topics as well as arranging submission dates and times. Each week, from Monday to Friday, they first submitted their contributions and then gave and received feedback from one of their peers. As the facilitator, I undertook the pairing up of the participants so that they could give feedback about each other's writings.

The data gathered from the participants came from e-diaries and informal discussions with the researcher on FB chat. The findings of the study revealed that peer feedback helped the participants in many aspects. For example, they recounted that they found it useful and supportive in terms of expressing their ideas and thoughts in English

effectively for even though they were advanced level speakers of English, when it came to writing, they had difficulty in translating their ideas and thoughts into English. In this regard, peer feedback helped them to use their EFL writing effectively, by identifying their common grammar errors and learning new vocabulary. Also, most of the participants reported that they felt comfortable in giving feedback to their peers as it took place through online social networking. Moreover, they explained that giving feedback on their peers' writings on FB felt authentic and intimate as they were used to giving comments about friends' pictures and posts through this medium.

Consequently, the experiences garnered from my MA study provided me with some useful insights for this study. For instance, I became aware that peer feedback in online writing can help EFL learners to enhance their writing skills and hence, I became interested in promoting collaboration among peers in this context. In addition to this, I observed that creative writing activities, which were used by the participants during the study, motivated and encouraged them to write more effectively. I only examined peer feedback in my MA dissertation. In my PhD I decided to investigate other types of peer collaboration. In my MA dissertation, I commented that I had noticed that friendships developed among pairs and that these had a positive impact on participants' writing development. They felt motivated and encouraged by their peers to write in English and felt they could discuss writing-related matters with their peers and find ways to write in English thanks to peer support.

In this Ph.D. thesis, my focus is on the participants' perceptions on their peer collaboration in the context of an online short story writing activity with small groups of high school EFL learners in more depth than in my previous study.

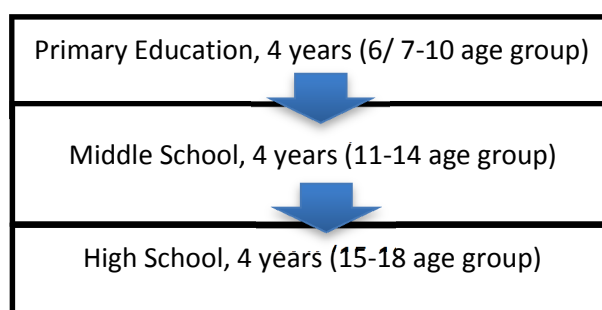
1.4. Context of the study

In this section, I first start by providing brief contextual information about the primary and secondary education system in Turkey. I then present a background to English language education in Turkish primary and secondary schools. Following this, I provide information about teaching English language in Turkish general high schools and finally, I describe the setting of the study: the Facebook group.

1.4.1 Primary and secondary education system in Turkey

In 2012, there were some changes made to the Turkish primary and secondary school education system. Formerly, the system followed a 5+3+3 framework, which was five years of primary, three years of middle and three years of high school. Currently, the new education system is following a 4+4+4 framework, which is four years of primary, four years of middle and four years of high school education. Also, the compulsory education period was increased from eight to twelve years. I illustrate the current framework of Turkish compulsory education in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Current framework of Turkish compulsory education



1.4.2 English language teaching in Turkish primary and secondary schools

To enable readers to understand the context of English language teaching in Turkish primary and secondary schools, I provide a short synopsis of the national requirements. The Turkish MONE (2011) has undertaken some policy changes regarding foreign language education so as to conform to the foreign language standards set by the European Union. That is, since 2012, the foreign language education curriculum, including English, has been based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Henceforth: CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001), which provides a common basis for language programmes and a comprehensive way to describe language teaching and learning processes.

Among the foreign languages offered in the Turkish education system, English is the only one taught as a compulsory subject at all levels. French and German are also taught as elective subjects in some of the schools (Kırkgöz, 2007). At the international level,

English is learnt to initiate and sustain communication with the outside world with respect to economic, social and business relations in order to increase Turkey's modernisation and westernisation process (Demirel, 1991; Jenkins, 2003). At the national level, English is learnt to obtain a better education and a prestigious job or to get promoted (Kırkgöz, 2005; 2008a). Under the new foreign language system, English language teaching starts from the 2nd grade in public schools. The Turkish MONE (2011) requires two hours per week for the public primary grades 2, 3 and 4, whereas for the public middle schools this increases to four hours per week for grades 5 to 8.

There are several types of high schools, including:

- ☐ Public high schools
- ☐ Private high schools
- ☐ Vocational and technical high schools

There are three types of public high schools: (1) Anatolian high school, (2) science high school and (3) vocational and technical high school. Anatolian high schools are the standard high schools providing basic high school education, whilst science high schools, as the name suggests, focus on science education. Vocational and technical high schools focus on a certain type of profession. There are, for example, vocational high schools for tourism, public health, religion, agriculture and mass media and technical high schools for engineering, chemistry, electronics, machinery and construction.

The Turkish MONE (2012a) explains that private primary and secondary schools fall into four categories, summarised by Dag as:

1. Private Turkish Schools (schools founded by Turkish citizens)
2. Private Minority Schools (schools founded by Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities under The Lausanne Convention)
3. Private Foreign Schools (schools founded by American, French and Italian citizens under The Lausanne Convention. Turkish students can also enrol.)
4. Private International Schools (only for foreign students) (Dag, 2015:192).

Dag (2015) writes that Turkish students can enrol in either private Turkish high schools, which have been founded by charitable foundations or private companies or private foreign schools (e.g. St. Joseph High School and Robert High School in Istanbul). According to the Turkish MONE (2012a), the abovementioned four types of private schools are regulated under Private Education Institutions Law no: 5580. Subasi & Dinler (2003) explain that private schools in Turkey are subject to inspection by the MONE and charge tuition fees.

Of these high schools, the participants for both the pilot and main studies in this research were chosen from public Anatolian high schools. These are schools with which I am familiar and where I have worked; they are ordinary schools with no additional privilege either in their provision of English teaching or any other aspect of classroom delivery. In order to continue studying in one of the above high schools, students must take the National Placement Test for Secondary Education (in Turkish it is called SBS) at the end of each academic year for the middle school grades from 5 to 8. Depending on the total marks from their SBS exams, students choose which high school from amongst those to which they are eligible to move on to.

Concerning English lessons at high school level, the provision in hours allocated varies across the different public high schools and also for the private high schools. First, Anatolian high schools allocate six hours for the first year (grade 9) and four hours for the other three years (grades 10-12). These high schools also provide a second foreign language (e.g. German or French). Science high schools allocate seven hours in the first year (grade 9) and then three hours for the other three years (grades 10-12). Vocational and technical high schools allocate two hours per week per week only in the first two years (grades 9 and 10). Private high schools (private Turkish high schools) allocate the most time for English instruction, up to ten hours per week and in addition, teach two more foreign languages, such as German-Italian, or French- Spanish (The Turkish MONE,2012a). In Table 1.1 below, I summarise the hours for English lessons allocated per week in each type of high school.

Table 1.1: Overview of hours of English language lessons allocated per week in Turkish high schools

Type of high schools		Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Public high school	Anatolian	6 hours	4 hours	4 hours	4 hours
	Science	7 hours	3 hours	3 hours	3 hours
	Vocational or technical high school	2 hours	2 hours	–	–
Private high school		Up to 10 hours	Up to 10 hours	Up to 10 hours	Up to 10 hours

1.4.3 Teaching English language in Turkish public high schools

Below I list the following general objectives of the English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum for public high schools (grades 9-12) with the items being taken from the Turkish MONE:

- to be enthusiastic about learning English;
- to become familiar with English language culture;
- to be able to distinguish the cultures of different English-speaking countries;
- to value themselves and also show tolerance and respect towards individuals different to themselves;
- to disseminate their own cultural values to foreigners;
- to familiarise themselves with world cultures by engaging with written and visual media;
- to express themselves, communicate and cooperate with others as well as enhance their problem-solving skills;
- to develop themselves personally, socially, and culturally;
- to improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities;
- to build their vocabulary knowledge in the target language;

- to develop their learning skills through the use of information technologies;
- to achieve the standards set out in the CEFR;
- to become motivated to use English and recognising the importance of learning a foreign language (the Turkish MONE, 2011:4).

According to the Turkish MONE (2012a), these general objectives are common to all the public high schools. Private Turkish high schools and private foreign high schools are also subject to regulations stipulated in the curriculum by the Turkish MONE. However, there is more freedom and flexibility regarding foreign language lessons and the number of hours allocated for such education, as indicated above, is greater than in public high schools.

The Turkish MONE (2011) holds that teachers of English in Turkish public high schools should implement the following six teaching methods: (1) lecture by the teacher, (2) class discussion, (3) demonstration, (4) case and problem solving method, (5) individual work and (6) pair or group work.

These teaching methods, based on the MONE's (2011) definitions are explained briefly as follows. Lecturing is a teacher-centred method which requires teachers to explain and interpret principles, concepts, ideas and all theoretical knowledge about a given topic. Class discussion method requires teachers to conduct the discussion and enable students to express their views in English on a given topic. The MONE also advises teachers to use small group discussions. Demonstration is a teacher-led method, which requires teachers to demonstrate a specific learning concept to students and subsequently, for them to practise it. For instance, in the pronunciation of a word in English, first, the teacher demonstrates how to pronounce the word and then asks the students to repeat it. Case and problem solving method is a student-centred method that enables students to exercise decision-making and seek solutions to real problems in small groups using a linguistic 'case'. Individual work is a student-centred method of teaching, whereby students work on individual tasks, such as taking notes or summarising their learning. Finally, pair / group work is a student-centred method of teaching, during which students work collaboratively and learn from each other. It is advised by the MONE that teachers should allow no more than 20 minutes for pair / group work activities and these can involve: brainstorming, question and answer, role- play, drama and educational

games. The MONE (2011) proposes that teachers of English in public high schools should seek to develop four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) equally in English lessons and to teach grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Regarding teaching materials, The MONE aimed to equip 42.000 primary and secondary public schools all around Turkey with the latest information communication technologies (ICT) in line with an initiative called the Fatih Project (the Turkish MONE, 2012b). According to the Fatih Project, it was proposed that all 570.000 classrooms in primary and secondary public high schools be transformed into ‘smart classrooms’ by installing Internet access in the classrooms, providing computers and installing LCD Interactive Boards. In addition, tablets were to be provided for all students to enable them to access e-content materials for their textbooks and workbooks (the Turkish MONE, 2012b). In accordance with the changes made in primary and secondary education in Turkey in 2012, the textbooks for English lessons at public high schools were redesigned. For Public Anatolian high schools, from where my participants from both the pilot and main studies were chosen for this research, the textbooks and workbooks were designed by The MONE (2011). The pilot study and main study participants’ textbook and workbook was ‘Yes You Can’ by Persembe, Bulug & Canmetin (2012) (see Appendix I for content pages from this textbook).

In relation to assessment, the MONE (2011) advises teachers of English in Turkish public high schools to use both verbal and written assessment. For verbal assessment, it suggests teachers ask their students to make presentations, work on group projects as well as perform peer and group assessments. Regarding written assessments, teachers are advised to set exams, which could include multiple choice, true/false, matching, open-ended or short answer questions.

Even though the MONE (2011) updated the curriculum for English lessons at public high school, redesigned the textbooks and equipped the classrooms with Internet and LCD Interactive Boards, Turkish scholars (e.g. Kizildag, 2009; and Kırkgöz, 2005, 2007, 2008b) have highlighted discrepancies in the quality of English language teaching. Kizildag (2009) identified discrepancies regarding the implementation of English language teaching that included the role of English teachers, student motivation and interest toward learning English, teaching methods, the learning environment and

the teaching materials. Kırkgöz (2008b) conducted a case study with 32 teachers on their implementation of curriculum innovation in English language teaching in the context of Turkish primary schools. The findings revealed that the teachers placed greater emphasis on the teaching of linguistic aspects of the target language rather than encouraging students to use the language and develop their communicative competence. Regarding Turkish public high schools, Kırkgöz (2005, 2007) highlighted that the qualification of English teachers, time constraints due to teaching hours, and type of teaching materials were potentially damaging the quality of teaching.

It is against the backdrop of these developments and concerns regarding them that my research has taken place over the years. The participants in my research have themselves been students in English classrooms during these times of change and innovation involving an explosion in the use of technology, both in the classroom and for personal use, one such medium Facebook, which I discuss in the next subsection as it was used in the current study.

1.4.4 The nature of the EFL classroom of the participants of the study

As I explain in Chapter 3, section 3.4, six Turkish high school EFL learners participated in this study. These six participants were selected from a class of 28 students with the help of their English teacher, who was a colleague of mine. The school was a public high school in Izmir and the six participants were 16 years old and in the 10th grade. In the following, I reflect in general on an EFL classroom such as would be typical of the one in which my six participants would be undertaking their learning. Even though this study took place outside the classroom, in an online setting (Facebook group), I have spent a considerable amount of time in schools including the participants' school, meeting students and staff and familiarizing myself with the EFL classroom context and the school context. It is on the basis of this familiarization that I next describe the nature of typical EFL classrooms.

Typically, the physical environment of the classroom would be organized with desks in straight rows facing the front of the classroom where the teacher's table is positioned near the windows opposite the classroom door. There would be a desktop computer at the teacher's desk and the board at the front of the classroom would be an interactive board.

The classroom would also be equipped with an Internet connection. The teacher's use of technology would consist mostly of projecting activities from the course book onto the interactive board with some variations such as teaching grammar topics through the interactive board.

I noticed that many teachers of EFL tended towards a teacher-centred approach. Again, typically, for example, with four hours of English lesson in a week, the teacher would use the first two hours for grammar teaching with formulas and grammar exercises and use the other two hours for reading and speaking activities from the course book. As the MONE (2011) advises teachers of EFL that they should allow no more than 20 minutes for pair / group work activities, the teacher would privilege teacher-student interaction over student-student interaction. Listening activities from the course book tended to be neglected. The teachers would tend to speak mostly in Turkish when explaining grammar topics and giving instructions regarding activities from the course book, usually asking questions in English especially at the beginning of the lessons regarding how the students felt that day and about how they were getting on with their English course and other school subjects. The assessment activities that I saw tended to comprise multiple choice, 'complete the sentence' and comprehension questions.

Often due to time constraints, teachers told me, writing exercises from the course book could not always be implemented in the classroom setting, and so some of them would be given as assignments. I saw little in terms of explicit teaching, encouragement and practice of extended writing and nothing in terms of creative writing. Limited hours of EFL lessons are one of the reasons why teachers of EFL in Turkey cannot devote much time to the development of writing skills. Furthermore, most of the teachers think that teaching speaking should be prioritized compared to writing in English. What I felt was deficient in EFL classroom regarding writing was the lack of self-confidence towards writing in EFL. Indeed, some students, I saw, were not aware of basic sentence structure in English, for example, subject and verb order and the use of auxiliary verbs and many had insecure knowledge of grammar. I noticed that students were generally reluctant to write in English because they were afraid of making mistakes and were worried about getting corrective feedback from their teachers.

These general observations and the lack of student self- confidence in writing in particular and the dissatisfaction expressed by teachers about their practice, inspired me to try out a different approach. It would be an approach that would, in fact, actually

correspond to quite a range of the Turkish MONE (2011) ELT objectives such as developing motivation, writing skills, communication skills, collaboration and cooperation with others, all aims that seemed lacking. I was also keen to explore the students' perceptions on the collaboration.

1.4.5 Setting of the study: Facebook group

Facebook, which is a U.S. based social networking platform, was initially founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 to stay in touch with his fellow students from Harvard University (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) and over time, the university social networking site developed into a global internet phenomenon (The Guardian, 2007). The mission of FB is described on Facebook About (2016) as “to give people the power to share and the make the world more open and connected.” FB users can stay connected with friends and family, discover the news around the world as well as share and express what matters to them.

A FB group is a place for small group communication for people to share their common interests and express their opinions. Any FB user can create a group for various purposes and these come in three categories. The first, is an open group that is made publicly available for anyone to join, whilst the second, is a private group that can be found by a search and requires administrator approval for members to join. The third type of group is a secret one that cannot be found by any form of searching and the administrator should send a private invitation to any preferred member (Hicks, 2010). In relation to the present study, a secret group was created for the EFL learners participating to communicate, work and produce pieces of creative writing in groups, collaboratively. The reason for creating a secret group for this study was because of the ethical considerations, which are explained in detail in Chapter 3 (see section 3.9). To date, FB has received considerable attention in the field of education research. As contended by Manca & Ranierit (2013), research studies on its implications for education have mainly focused on student and teacher usage, students' attitudes, impact on academic performance and regarding its use as a tool supporting students learning outside the classroom setting. In this regard, for the present study FB was engaged with as an outside classroom learning tool to supplement Turkish public high school EFL learners' writing development through peer collaboration with minimal teacher support in the

context of online creative writing.

According to Quintly (2013), which refers to itself as a social media benchmarking and reporting company based on February 2013 statistics, there are about 1,056,000,000 FB users worldwide. This company has also listed the top 10 countries with the most FB users and the table below displays these with the number of FB users (ibid).

Figure 1.2 Quintly's top 10 countries with the most FB users (February 2013 statistics)

	Country	Users ▼
	World	971,426,940
1.	United States	164,958,520
2.	Brazil	65,657,820
3.	India	61,697,760
4.	Indonesia	48,807,580
5.	Mexico	39,810,220
6.	United Kingdom	32,597,460
7.	Turkey	32,260,920
8.	Philippines	30,214,140
9.	France	25,502,360
10.	Germany	25,284,240

As illustrated above, Turkey, where the study is based, is ranked number 7 with roughly 32.5 million users, which represents a substantial proportion of its approximately 80 million total population. As pointed out by Demirtas (2012), most of the FB users in Turkey are between the age of 18 and 35. In addition to this, this author has reported that there are 18.1 million online social networking users who are 15 years old and above. Moreover, about 50% of the online social networking users in Turkey are documented as being children aged between 9 and 16. Even though many online social networking sites put the age limit as 13 to open a profile, as highlighted by Demirtas (2012), in Turkey most of the children below this age have at least one profile on online social networking sites. Demirtas also listed the widely used online social networking sites in Turkey as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (ibid).

According to the statistics of Nation Master (2013) Turkey has the youngest population of any country in Europe and Turkish youngsters a tendency to uptake new technology faster than other countries. Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites among Turkish youngsters. In my study, I had the opportunity to discuss with some of the students during the lesson breaks their views on the use of FB. According to their recounting, Turkish youngsters are highly pressurized with their school subjects and, on the top of that, most of them attend extra courses after school to consolidate the subjects that are covered at school. The reason why they were working hard was to get the highest possible scores in the university placement tests that they were going to take some three years later. Therefore, they have very limited time to socialize with their friends outside of the school hours. The students explained that they use FB to chat with their friends, follow their friends' posts with amusing videos or pictures or share interesting quotes from known authors, poets and thinkers. Some of the students said that they use FB to play online games through this medium. All in all, all students shared the same thought that FB gives them a breathing environment for them to relax and socialize. Their views do in fact reflect the official FB mission statement but more importantly their FB use responds to the immense work pressures on them in what are challenging political times in Turkey.

School classroom contexts in Turkish High Schools, as mentioned previously, tend to be formally organised, highly structured, teacher-centred with traditional teacher to class speaking activities, with limited opportunity for student to student interaction and very little time for students to explore the language in its written form in any imaginative way. Facebook as a highly popular social medium enthused the Turkish students in this study to exploit its potential for engaging and collaborative learning purposes based on their keenness to improve their written English. In contrast to the classroom context, the students were able to self-organise and take leadership to identify their own needs and interests and, in their own timespan, plan how to work on their writing in a focused and serious yet playful way.

1.5 What is this thesis about?

To reiterate then, this thesis is an exploration of the perceptions of Turkish EFL high school students about peer collaboration. Underlying this exploration was a concern to consider how to encourage EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to improve their writing skills in English through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise. The focus of this research is an investigation of two groups of three, in total six EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration using the medium of Facebook and their perceptions on what peer collaboration meant to them and what they considered to be the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development during an online short story writing activity. As the focus of this research did not comprise a scrutiny of the actual impact of the peer collaboration on these EFL learners' writing outcomes, I did not analyse their writing pieces. Rather, I focus on their interpretations of peer collaboration and their perceptions on the impacts of peer collaboration during the story writing activity because I saw this as a gap in the literature. I was interested to discover their views on peer collaboration, explore peer affective factors and see how, within the parameters of the activity guidelines I provided, the participants would organize themselves to undertake their learning more or less independently as a peer group. To this end I used qualitative methods that included focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats and online discussion boards to obtain insights into their ways of working and perceptions on the collaborative activity. In this current study, I employed mainly focus group discussions and for data triangulation reasons, I employed online one-to-one chats and online discussion boards. Focus group discussions I considered particularly suitable for the purposes of ensuring a comfortable environment in which to enable the participants to share their perceptions and views in a trustful and honest way, thereby providing data with which to respond to my research questions.

1.6 Aim and Research Questions

Aim: The aim of this research is to explore the perceptions and interpretations of a group of Turkish EFL High School students about peer collaboration. Behind this aim was a concern to find a way to enable them to improve their writing skills in English through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise. To address this, I investigated

two groups of three EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration in an online creative short story writing activity and examined their perceptions on the meaning of collaboration for them and on the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity.

Research Questions: In this study, in order to respond to the aforementioned aim of this study, after much thought and consideration on the issues, and reflection on my previous research and my reading in the vast field on collaborative writing, I arrived at the two following research questions. These questions were designed to ensure a focus on the student perceptions that would derive from the planned student interactions:

1. How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
2. What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

1.7 Significance of the Study

As discussed earlier, the context of this study was one of encouraging EFL learners in Turkish public high schools to enhance their writing skills through peer collaboration through online creative writing. Thus, understanding how students engage in a different type of peer collaboration (such as in this study) and how they can be enabled to develop the peer affective dimension to enhance the cognitive dimension in a mutually enhancing way to improve their writing skills (something I have found lacking in the literature in the context of Turkish EFL learners) makes a clear contribution to the knowledge about EFL writing development in Turkish high schools.

The contribution to the field in theoretical terms comprises an expanded and more nuanced definition of peer leadership than exists in the current literature and that arose from the peer leadership style that developed in this study. My study elaborates on the conditions, both inside the classroom but crucially outside the classroom, that can promote a developmental peer leadership style in a collaborative learning task that develops from a traditional rather top-down form to a shared, supportive and ultimately

affiliative style. This study also highlights how, with such a peer leadership style in a context of small autonomous learning groups, peer affective factors develop in such a way that cognitive and affective dimensions articulate harmoniously and flexibly, based on a deep friendship, for the benefit of the learners in terms of equality of esteem, self-confidence and perceptions of progress. It is a unique study in highlighting these features.

Also, it is hoped that the findings will elicit a deep understanding of the processes that will enable English teachers and other practitioners and scholars in the ELT community to create student-centred writing models to promote EFL writing development with less teacher support and more productive peer collaboration through online creative writing activities, whether in or out of the classroom setting. From discussion with teachers in Turkish high schools and presentations of my findings at conferences such as World Conference on Computers in Education in Torun, Poland in 2013, and International Federation for Information Processing TC3 working conference on A New Culture of Learning: Computing and Next Generations in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2015, it would seem that teachers and scholars are keen to think about how the limited time in class and out of school learning could be used more effectively than at present especially with regards to meeting the requirements of the MONE (2011).

1.8 Definition of Terms

In this section, I define the following three concepts that are central to this thesis: 1) peer leadership, 2) peer affective support and, 3) peer feedback, as identified during the main study and which appear repeatedly. These three concepts, taken together, constitute peer collaboration in this research on an online short story writing activity.

Peer Leadership can be defined as “a process where an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010:3). In the study, the common goal was to write a short story collaboratively in small groups of three in an FB group. The participants in both groups felt the need to elect a group leader when given little guidance by the facilitator (me) during the early stages of the writing activity. The group leaders led the writing activity by making decisions on behalf of the group partners about what to write in each session. They provided linguistic assistance and peer

feedback during the writing activity. Also, they gave affective support, such as awarding praise (e.g. well done! excellent! good work!), when group partners managed to achieve a task during the writing exercise and using motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you), when their group partners faced difficulties in writing in English.

Peer Affective support is viewed as a basic provision of close personal relationships (Cunningham & Barbee, 2000) and is considered as an important determinant of satisfaction within these. People value the emotional support skills of their relationship partners and perceptions of emotional supportiveness have been found to play a critical role in the development and maintenance of friendships, romances, families, and work relationships (Burleson, 2003). Concerning peer emotional support in writing, as argued by Scott & Rockwell (1997), learners' emotions and motivation can affect the way they learn. For instance, anxiety that arises from the pressure of learning a language can result in low productivity, dislike or fear of writing. Therefore, when producing written work together, Gebhardt (1980) suggested that peers should offer each other emotional support to decrease the anxiety and increase the motivation for writing.

In this study, peer affective support strategies used by the participants were giving and receiving praise and motivational phrases, ensuring that everyone felt comfortable with each other when undertaking the writing exercise, informal language use in group discussions including terms of endearment (e.g. darling, honey and love) and the use of humour when undertaking individual writing.

Peer Feedback is known in the L2 writing literature as 'peer review' (Magelsdorf, 1991), 'corrective feedback' (Perigoy & Boyle, 2001), 'peer evaluation' (Chaudron, 1984), 'peer critique' (Hvitfeldt, 1986), and 'peer response' (Urzua, 1987; Keh, 1990; Di Pardo & Freedman, 1992; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005) and praise (Lee, 2010). As explained in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.1) in detail, according to the categories of peer feedback types proposed by Perigoy & Boyle's (2001) and Lee (2010), in this current study, corrective peer feedback and praise were mostly used by the participants in this research.

1.9 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 (this chapter) has included an introduction and elaborated on the context to this thesis as well as its aim and research questions. The following chapter (Chapter 2) describes the problem of EFL and writing skills, outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the study and provides a review of literature pertinent to collaborative writing in an EFL context. The chapter also explores issues of leadership and peer affective factors within a teaching and learning framework of peer collaboration. Chapter 3 discusses and justifies the methodology and techniques used in the study. In Chapter 4, I present the analysis and findings of the data gathered from the focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats and the online discussion threads. In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings and relate these to issues in the literature review. Finally, in Chapter 6, I conclude this thesis by considering the implications and limitations of the study as well as highlighting the strengths and potential of such an approach that engages students, cognitively and affectively, in peer collaboration. I also identify the contribution to new knowledge and make suggestions for future research ending with a final reflection on this research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections that represent the conceptual frames of this study. First, I discuss EFL and ESL and the position of the participants of this study as EFL learners. I then consider the under-privileged skill of writing in Turkish classrooms that is an important driver of this research. I outline the theoretical underpinning of the study, which involves drawing on social constructivism to guide the approach to EFL writing instruction in this study. The next section provides a review of previous research on peer collaboration in EFL writing. In what follows, I explore peer collaboration in small group learning and with reference to ICT, also to peer leadership that emerged as a crucial in this study. Peer affective factors underpin all these issues and are central to this study. There is a vast amount of literature on the key theme of peer collaboration within the conceptual domain of collaboration. In the light of my previous small scale research for my MA, I became aware of gaps in the literature, noticeably about peer affective factors in peer collaboration especially at secondary student level, and particularly in the Turkish context. I found nothing on secondary school students' perceptions on what peer collaboration means to them, again especially in the context of Turkish secondary student EFL learning. I begin, first, with a discussion about the terms EFL and ESL to ensure clarification about these in the context of this research, Turkey, defined by Kachru (1992) as an 'expanding circle' country.

2.2 EFL and ESL

Both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) entail the teaching of English to the speakers of other languages, but the teaching and learning environments vary between the two. According to Howatt & Widdowson (2004), in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) the distinction between 'foreign' and 'second' language started to emerge in the 1950s. Regarding this, Klein (1986) provided definitions of these two terms stating that the term 'foreign language' (FL) refers to a language acquired in an environment where it is not necessarily used outside the classroom, whereas 'second language' (L2) is used to denote a language

acquired in a social environment, which is actually spoken outside the classroom. It could be said that an L2 is a tool for communication alongside the first language (L1) in an L2 context. To give an example based on Klein's definitions, a Turkish student who learns English in a Turkish school is considered to be an FL user of English, while a Turk who has migrated to the UK and presently works and lives there is considered to be an L2 user of it.

According to Richards, Platt & Weber (1985), ESL has three meanings: (1) the use of English by immigrants and other minority groups in English-speaking countries, (2) the use of English in countries where it is widely used, but not the first language of the people and (3) in the US usage, the use of English in countries where it is not an L1. However, it should be noted that in Britain, the lattermost is called EFL. In this study, I use EFL to refer the use of English in those states termed by Kachru (1992) as 'expanding circle' countries where English language plays no historical or governmental role and it is generally taught as an FL subject in schools for international communication.

Regarding the characteristics of EFL contexts, Maple (1997:35-36) described them as follows:

- Learning takes places in a non-acquisition environment;
- The vast majority of teachers are non-native speakers of English. The English proficiency of these teachers varies widely from fully bilingual to minimally functional;
- Concerning the motivation factor, most of the learners learn English as either a compulsory course at school or for their own needs and pleasure;
- Learners study English for only a few hours per week and their exposure is limited (2 to 4 hours).

In brief, Tomlinson (2005: 137) summarised the characteristics of EFL contexts as those where "most learners of EFL learn in school together with a class of peers of similar age and English proficiency. They typically have a course book, they are preparing for an examination, and they are usually taught by a non-native English teacher."

2.3 The skill of writing

According to Cumming (1996), language learning depends on acquiring four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing and these are often equally important in language education. However, concerning EFL education, the writing skill (as discussed in Chapter 1) is generally consigned to the end of teaching unit and used mainly for homework by teachers for a number of reasons, including time constraints and the requirements regarding curriculum coverage (Byrne, 1988; Hyland, 2003; Hedge, 2005). Owing to this, as argued by Hedge (2005), learners often see writing as being of secondary importance and hence, they fail to put the necessary effort into improving their writing skills in the target language. In this regard, my interest in investigating EFL writing arose from this problem. More specifically, it prompted me to place my research focus on EFL writing in a Turkish public high school context, where the skill of writing is given little attention in English lessons. According to Aydin & Başöz (2010), EFL learners in Turkish secondary schools are usually unable to undertake enough writing in English lessons due to factors such as time constraints, inadequate writing instruction, exam-oriented classrooms, grammar- / reading-based textbooks and teachers' attitudes towards EFL writing, all of which have the impact of reducing opportunities for students to develop their writing skills.

Before moving on to consider EFL writing, I first discuss the scope of L2 writing research. Jun (2008) claimed that the emergence of L2 writing research first started in the investigation of international ESL learners' writing skills at institutions of higher education in North America in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, it was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that L2 writing evolved as an interdisciplinary field of academic study (Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland & Warschauer, 2003). Ferris (2012:226) noted that L2 writing emerged as "a fascinating and rapidly growing area of interest in L2 research and pedagogy." The need for L2 writing research and pedagogy has become increasingly evident as a result of the international expansion of this lingua franca in academic and professional communication (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper & Matsuda, 2009). In addition to this, Hyland (2003) highlighted that it is very important to prepare second and foreign language learners with good writing skills to help them communicate their ideas and information effectively through the global technology network.

Empirical research on L2 writing has flourished over the past twenty years or so. A scholarly journal originated in 1992 (*The Journal of Second Language Writing*) and a regular international symposium was started up in 1998 (*The Symposium on Second Language Writing*). Special interest groups within TESOL, as well as the production of thousands of books, hundreds of articles and MA and Ph.D. theses concerning L2 writing have substantially contributed to this field of inquiry. Ferris (2009) argued that the widening of L2 writing research has also led to the contexts and student population under consideration being broadened. Earlier, the focus of inquiry was mainly based on international students' L2 writing skills in higher education, whereas today, researchers investigate various different types of L2 writing, for example:

- ESL writing;
- EFL writing;
- English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing;
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP) writing;
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) writing;
- Foreign Language (FL) writing.

With respect to such examples, this research study concerns EFL writers, because the participants of the study are EFL learners in a Turkish public high school, as was discussed in the previous chapter (Introduction).

Fujieda (2006) contended in his historical review of L2 writing research that studies regarding the EFL writing context are scant when compared to ESL writing, on which most primary research in L2 contexts is centred. According to Reichelt (1999, 2001), there are several purposes for implementing the skill of writing in a foreign language (including EFL) classroom, as summarised in the following points:

- to practise learners' grammatical forms and structures as well as vocabulary and spelling;
- to support other language skills such as reading and listening;
- to teach composition such as letter/e-mail writing;
- to communicate with the target language's culture.

Regarding the Turkish secondary school context, three categories pertaining to the purposes of the skill can be identified from the ELT curriculum designed by the Turkish MONE (2011:11), which states that:

- learners should be prepared to write in real-life situations, such as writing invitation cards, postcards, (formal and informal) letters and filling in forms
- learners should be encouraged to learn how to write in an online setting, such as writing e-mails, blog entries, status reports on social networking sites,
- learners should be encouraged to engage in writing skills through creative writing such as story or poem writing.

In light of these three recommendations, I chose to focus on creative writing, more specifically, short story writing for the design of this current study's collaborative activity, because I considered that it would serve as an effective tool for stimulating EFL learners' interest and motivation in engaging with writing. As explained in Chapter 3 (see section 3.3). I applied this current study in an online setting, namely, in an FB group, instead of a classroom one, because it was not possible for me as a researcher to intervene in a teacher's lesson in a Turkish public high school. Consequently, this current research was designed to be undertaken in an FB group, which I also felt the students would find intrinsically interesting given their social networking predilection.

To recap, the general purpose of this study is to investigate Turkish public high school EFL learners' perceptions on peer collaboration within a context of an intervention designed to improve the students' writing skills through peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity. To facilitate this, in the following sections, I first locate the theoretical underpinnings of the study within the theory of social constructivism and approaches to EFL writing instruction. Then, I review the literature pertinent to this research study under the following two subheadings: (1) studies on peer collaboration in EFL writing and (2) studies on types of peer collaboration in EFL writing.

2.4 Theoretical Underpinnings

This section provides an overview of the theoretical underpinning used for this study. First, I outline the theory of social constructivism, in which I locate the present study. Then, I describe approaches to EFL writing instruction and justify why I deemed the process-oriented approach as appropriate for the study.

2.4.1 Social Constructivist Theory

Social constructivism centres on the importance of social and cultural factors in the process of knowledge construction in terms of what occurs in society (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997). Regarding educational settings, the development theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1986; 1990) are regarded as laying the foundation of social constructivism. Social constructivist theory is based upon specific assumptions about reality, knowledge and learning. Its proponents believe that reality is constructed through human activity and as argued by Kukla (2000), members of a society together invent the properties of the world. Consequently, the social constructivist view holds that reality cannot be discovered and it does not exist prior to its social invention. The social constructivist paradigm characterises knowledge as “the sets of beliefs or mental models people use to interpret actions and events in the world” (Jackson & Klobas, 2008:330). That is, knowledge is a human product and is socially and culturally constructed with individuals creating meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environments they live in (Ernest, 1999; Gredler, 1997). According to the social constructivist perspective, learning is a social process and it does not take place only within an individual nor is it a passive development, for behaviours are shaped by external forces (McMahon, 1997). Lightbrown & Spada (2006) claimed that the social constructivist view of learning takes place as a consequence of social interaction among learners or between learners and teachers in a group.

The social constructivist paradigm in educational settings is considered as a branch of constructivist thought. According to Brooks & Brooks (1993: vii), “constructivism is not a theory of teaching... it is a theory about knowledge and learning... the theory defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated and thus non-objective.” In the light of constructivist learning, as argued by Davis, Maher &

Noddings (1990), it is assumed that learners have to construct their own knowledge both individually and collectively. According to Brown (2007), each learner constructs knowledge with his/her concepts and skills in order to solve the problems presented by the environment. In this regard, the role of other learners and teachers in this knowledge construction, is to provide the setting, pose the challenges and offer support.

From a social constructivist perspective, Vygotsky (1978) saw language as a social activity that people use as a tool to convey meaning between each other. According to Wilson (1999), we sometimes use different forms of language as in writing, talking to a friend or muttering to ourselves silently, in order to think or to discover what we know and through language we generate meaning. Wilson claimed that learning takes place through dialogue that is mediated through language and other systems such as gestures or diagrams. This dialogue can take place between the teacher and student or among students or even between text and the author. In this study, learners of EFL in groups were encouraged to communicate, discuss and negotiate in writing by using their first language (Turkish) to produce a short story in English within their groups in an FB group setting, with the purpose of enhancing their EFL writing development. Under a social constructivist optic, as stated by Storch (2005) and Shehadeh (2011), collaborative work undertaken by pairs or in small groups in an L2 writing context is supported by this perspective of learning. As argued by Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is created through social interaction with others and learning results from social negotiation, social interaction and collaboration. Building on these statements regarding a social constructivist view of learning through writing, in this study, I intended to investigate EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity and to explore these learners' perceptions on the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development during the activity. Moreover, referring to the social constructivist theory of learning through writing, Bullock & Muschamp (2006) stated that learner-centred writing activities contribute an essential factor in the learning process for language learners, that is, they take on more responsibility regarding their own learning.

As argued by second/foreign language researchers (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006; Brown, 2007), there are three main principles that are often applied in a Vygotskian language learning classroom, which I consider pertinent for this study, these being:

1. Learning and development is a social, collaborative activity;
2. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can serve as a guide for teachers in planning learning activities;
3. Learning activities should occur in a meaningful context.

Learning and development is a social, collaborative activity

Elaborating on these principles in turn, the first refers to learning and development as a social, collaborative activity. Proponents of social constructivist learning hold the stance that students should shape meaning and construct knowledge collectively through negotiation of meaning and self-reflection (Higgs & McCarty, 2005). This kind of learning appears to be closely related to collaborative learning, which, as defined by Dillenbourg (1999:1), is when “two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together”. In the present study, Turkish public high school EFL learners in small groups of three are encouraged to undertake a short story writing activity. The main purpose of this short story writing activity in an FB group is to enhance these EFL learners’ writing skills through peer collaboration. Collaborating does not happen automatically or unproblematically. Social and organizational skills are needed to frame and scaffold the activity and I was interested to see how the participants would understand and negotiate their collaboration.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can serve as a guide for teachers in planning learning activities

The ZPD was defined by Vygotsky (1987: 86) as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers”. That is, learners can reach their ZPD level for learning through social interaction with more able peers (Vygotsky, 1987) and as the present study concerns learning through peer collaboration, it is expected that EFL

learners can collaborate, discuss and produce pieces of writing with peers collaboratively and learn from one another. Moreover, each EFL learner can have different levels of linguistic and other personal competences. For example, within a group, one learner might know more vocabulary than the others and another could have better leadership skills than the others. In short, learners who are more capable of particular linguistic or personal skills can support others and in this way, they might produce effective pieces of writing and learn from one another during the process. Again, with little support from myself as researcher, I was interested to discover how the participants would construct their learning collaboratively according to their different needs and levels.

Learning activities should occur in a meaningful context

Third, Vygotsky (1987) argued that learning activities should take place in a meaningful context. In this regard, Brown, Collins & Duguid (1989), elaborating this principle, contended that learners need to be engaged in activities that have purpose and meaning. According to Brown et al., activities should be engaging and arouse learners' interest (ibid). In this study, I opted for a short story writing exercise because it was believed that this type of writing exercise can stimulate EFL learners' interest and motivation toward the writing skill and therefore ensure a meaningful learning environment for learners (Ur, 1996).

From my understanding of the above principles, I drew upon this for an example writing activity (see Figure 2.1) from a course book used in Turkish high schools and that the participants in this study may well have undertaken and explain why this activity is deemed to be responsive to a social constructivist approach.

Figure 2.1 Writing Activity (from Persembe, Bulug & Canmetin, 2012: 62)

E. Put the following pictures of the famous fable into correct order.



a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

F. Write a three-paragraph short story by making use of the pictures above. Swap your writing with your classmate(s) and rearrange your text considering their feedbacks according to the peer correction table.

Peer Correction Table	(√) Yes	(X) No
Are there three paragraphs?		
Are the events in correct order?		
Does your peer mention the events in each picture?		
Do the sentences express the actions correctly?		
Is the spelling correct?		

Taking the form of a short story writing activity involving some peer collaboration, the students are first asked to put the pictures in order and then write a three-paragraph short story using them as an aid. After they have written their stories, they are asked to swap them with their classmate(s) and then, to give and receive peer feedback using the peer correction table provided on the page.

With respect to the social constructivist approach, first, the above writing activity is an example of peer collaboration in EFL writing because it involves peer-feedback. During the activity, the students are encouraged to discuss and edit each other's short stories through peer-feedback. As a result, writing becomes a social activity rather than an individual one and writing through social interaction with peers can facilitate student learning. Second, as I discussed above, the students may have different linguistic or other personal competences and during a peer feedback activity, those more capable can support those less able and through this learning can occur. In sum, such an arrangement can stimulate students' interest and motivate them to engage in the process of the writing exercise, hence enabling learning to occur in a meaningful context. It was however my intention to challenge the participants to choose their own story topic from a selection of topics of relevance to teenagers and to have the freedom to decide how to monitor their own learning rather than have a prepared checklist as with the above exercise.

2.4.2 Approaches to EFL Writing Instruction

Chronologically, approaches to EFL writing instruction have, broadly speaking, progressed through the following three stages (Badger & White, 2000):

1. The Product-oriented approach;
2. The Process-oriented approach;
3. The Genre-oriented approach.

Before discussing why the process-oriented approach was adopted for the present research, I explain each approach in brief.

First, the product-oriented approach was born from the marriage of structural linguistics and the behaviourist learning theories concerning second languages that were dominant in the 1960s (Silva, 1990). This approach constitutes “product- oriented” and “teacher-centred” pedagogical practices, which focus on the organisation, sentence structures and various grammatical aspects of the model texts, with the learners asked to analyse them and then produce similar ones as their final product. In this approach, writing is considered to be imitating, copying and transforming the models of correct language, as provided by the teacher (Hyland,

2003; Matsuda, 2003). According to Hyland (2003), the product approach model of writing comprises four stages: familiarisation, controlled writing, guided writing and free writing. To elaborate on these stages, regarding familiarisation, learners are taught certain elements of grammar and vocabulary, usually through a text. During controlled writing, learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables, whilst for guided writing, they imitate model texts and finally in free writing, they use the patterns they have developed to write pieces, for example, an essay, letter, and so forth.

Alptekin & Tatar (2011) highlighted in their review of EFL writing studies in Turkey from the period 2005-2011, in Turkish public high schools, that EFL teachers have mostly focused more on the product-oriented than on the process-oriented approach when teaching the skill of writing. As suggested by these authors, an effective approach

to EFL writing would involve a creative process of expressing oneself and also comprise the planning, composing and revision processes of writing. In addition to this, the most recent ELT curriculum in Turkey encourages EFL teachers to employ the process-oriented approach to the skill of writing, because according to the Turkish MONE (2011), the process-oriented approach promotes peer collaboration and autonomy in writing.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the process-oriented approach emerged “as a reaction against product-oriented pedagogies” (Susser 1994: 34). Researchers reacted against the limiting and prescriptive nature of the product approach and started to search for more effective ways of teaching writing and consequently therefore, the process-oriented approach arose (Freedman, Dyson, Flower & Chafe, 1987). In contrast to the former perspective, the process-oriented approach involves “student- centred” and “humane and intimate” pedagogical practices. For example, it allows students to choose their own topic, helps them discover their own voice and enables them to express their ideas and feelings when writing. As commented upon by Ramies (1983), this approach pertains to creative writing in which the learners express their own ideas and opinions, putting forward meaning rather than the imitation of models. The writing process under this approach can be regarded as “non-linear, explanatory and a generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1983: 165). Moreover, Matsuda (2003) noted that here writing is regarded as a process of developing organisation as well as meaning. During the writing process, students engage in pre-writing, drafting and post-drafting activities and the role of L2 teachers is to help them to find writing topics, generate ideas, plan structure, draft and revise their grammar as well as rearrange their ideas (Silva, 1990).

The process-oriented approach to writing is non-linear and recursive, that is, planning, drafting and revision as well as editing activities might not follow a linear sequence. At any point, a writer can jump backward and/or forward to any of these activities (Hyland, 2003) and, it could be said that this way of working is concerned with how writers produce a text, rather than what they produce. Furthermore, as argued by Steele (1992), this approach involves peer collaboration during the process of writing through brainstorming, group discussion, peer feedback and collaborative writing. In addition, it reflects the expressivist and cognitivist views of writing. The former was encouraged in

L1 writing research but has also been deployed in the L2 writing field of inquiry. More specifically, the eminent theorists in this field, namely, Peter Elbow (1973) in his work *'Writing without Teachers'* and Donald Murray (1985) in his study *'Writer Teaches Writing'*, advocated 'free writing' pedagogical practice, through which there is an attempt to foster writers' expressive abilities and encourage them to find their own voices and to discover themselves in their writings. Hyland asserted that (2009:

19) "the expressivist view strongly resists a narrow definition of writing based on notions of correct grammar and usage. Instead it sees writing as a creative act of discovery in which the process is as important as the product of the writer." Under this perspective, writing is learnt, not taught and the role of the teachers is to facilitate students' learning without directing them or imposing their views or giving models of writing as well as to providing them with a non-threatening environment where they can make their own meanings in a positive, encouraging and cooperative way. Pre-writing activities, such as journal-writing and analogies, are suggested as writing activities to stimulate students' thinking (Elbow, 1998).

The cognitivist view emerged in the early 1980s and has often been described as reflecting 'a decision making' or 'a problem solving' approach to writing instruction (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Reid (1993:7) defined it as "a shifted combination of process and product". This approach attempts to identify the hidden underlying processes in the process-oriented approach (Furneaux, 1999) and its supporters believe that composing processes are interactive, involving the writer and the reader, which means therefore, that composing should be a goal-oriented activity (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). The cognitivist approach has been influenced by the model regarding L1 writing processes established by Flower & Hayes (1981), which covers the three processes of: planning, translating and reviewing that a writer may undertake during the writing activity. To explain briefly each process, first, planning involves generating ideas, organisation and goal-setting, while translating includes putting ideas into visible language and then into written words to build up a cohesive and coherent text. Lastly, reviewing is the act of evaluating either what has been planned or written. Throughout this composing process, reading and editing are the strategies employed (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes & Flower, 1986).

In the 1980s, the genre-oriented approach attracted considerable attention among L2 writing researchers. Mendonca & Johnson (1994) argued that the process-oriented approach arose as a reaction to the product-oriented approach and subsequently, the genre-oriented one emerged as a reaction to both the product and process-oriented forms. Similar to the process-oriented approach, this one focuses on the planning-writing and reviewing framework. However, what makes it different from the previous two is its focus, that is, the product-oriented approach focuses on the text, while the process-oriented is on the writer and the focus for the genre approach is on the reader. Of these three options concerning approaches to EFL writing instruction, I decided that the process-oriented approach was the most apt for the present research for the following reasons, and in particular the last point given the focus of this research:

- Writing is considered as being a creative process;
- Learning is thought to be student-centred;
- It allows students to undertake a recursive model of writing using three phases: (1) planning, (2) composing and (3) revisions;
- The process of students' writing is more important than their end products;
- It encourages students to engage in peer collaboration during the writing process.

In the following section, I move to outlining previous studies on peer collaboration in EFL writing of relevance to this study.

2.5 Previous research on peer collaboration in EFL writing

In this section, I review previous studies that are pertinent to this research under peer collaboration in EFL writing.

According to Gamson (1997), peer collaboration in learning involves: being self-aware about purposes, mutual interdependence, the capacity to benefit from differences and the ability to resolve conflicts. Considerable research (e.g. Johnson & Johnson 1975, 1986, 1989; Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson & Skon, 1981; Johnson & Holubec, 1990; Bruffee. 1993) has been conducted in the area of peer collaboration and the

findings have indicated that a collaborative process among peers can result in better motivation, higher performance and better thinking skills. Also, a number of studies (e.g. Jarvela, Hakkarainen, Lipponen & Lehtinen 2000; Lee & Chen 2000; Su, Chen, Chen & Tsai, 2000) have carried out collaborative writing in computer-based and internet-based environments.

Peer collaboration appears to contribute to increased complexity in writing (Sotillo, 2000), higher quality of writing (Storch, 2005) and can also be a source of student motivation (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Storch and Wigglesworth found that:

[peer collaboration in writing] afforded the students the opportunity to interact on different aspects of writing. In particular, it encouraged students to collaborate when generating ideas and afforded students the opportunity to give and receive immediate feedback on language, an opportunity missing when students write individually (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007:172).

Regarding writing activities, peer collaboration involves learners interacting with each other in pairs or small groups (Storch, 2013). According to Storch (2005), when peer collaboration was first introduced in L2 writing lessons, it was often limited to either the beginning (brainstorming) or the final stage (peer feedback) of writing. Storch (2005) added that, writing activities in L2 writing lessons, included peer collaboration throughout all stages of writing with pairs / small groups. This feature of peer collaboration in writing is called “collaborative writing” (Storch 2013, 2011, 2005). Scardamalia (2002) argued that collaborative writing usually involves the following stages: group planning, co-creating writing work, co-editing and peer feedback.

Choa & Lo (2011) suggested that collaborative writing should include two or more writers to produce a written piece of work. In this current study, Turkish EFL learners were asked to produce a short story in English in small groups (groups of three) in the setting of an FB group. I wanted to promote collaborative writing in my current study, because no such study has been documented in a Turkish public high school context before. I searched national and international scholarly journals for studies on this topic as well as MA and PhD theses through the Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis

Centre (YÖK Ulusal Tez Merkezi, 2015). However, as a result of my search, I was unable to find any studies regarding the use of collaborative writing in a Turkish public high school. Through carrying out this study, I aimed to encourage Turkish public high school EFL learners to improve their writing skills through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise and in particular through an understanding of what they thought peer collaboration meant.

In what follows, concerning peer collaboration in EFL writing contexts, I outline studies on “peer feedback” and “collaborative writing”. These two features of peer collaboration in EFL writing are generally categorised in line with the process- oriented EFL writing instruction (Storch, 2011). These are explained in more detail below.

Peer feedback: As well as teacher’s feedback, Seliger (1983) noted that peers can also give it to each other, which is called peer feedback. Peer feedback in EFL writing has been described by Liu and Hansen as the:

use of learners as sources of information and interactions for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing. (Liu & Hansen, 2002:1)

In this current study, peer feedback was undertaken among EFL learners in a written format in the process of collaborative writing. In the following, I review relevant studies on peer feedback in EFL writing in a written format.

According to Peregoy & Boyle (1997), there are two different types of written peer feedback: (1) peer response and (2) corrective feedback. These authors asserted that peer response involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a peer’s writing as well as making suggestions about how to improve it, whereas peer editing focuses on feedback on accuracy of grammatical structures, vocabulary, spelling, capitalisation, and punctuation. Lee (2010), on the other hand, divided peer feedback into three broad types: (1) praise, (2) criticism and (3) suggestion. As described by Lee, praise (e.g. very interesting, very good) refers to the positive aspects of the writing, whereas criticism pertains to negative comments used by reviewers to show what dissatisfies them.

Suggestion is related to criticism, but has a positive aspect in terms of feedback involving constructive comments being given for improvement of the work.

The use of peer feedback in EFL writing classroom is supported by the theoretical underpinnings offered by the process-oriented approach (Harmer, 2004), with both positive and negative dimensions having been identified by scholars. Regarding the positive, the findings of the existing studies claim that peer feedback has beneficial impacts on EFL learners' writing development in English (e.g. Miao, Badger & Zhen, 2006; Min, 2006; Kamimura, 2006), develops EFL learners' critical thinking, learner autonomy and social interaction among their peers during writing process (Miao et al., 2006), providing affective benefits for EFL learners, such as feedback given between/among peers reducing writing anxiety in English (e.g. Kurt & Atay, 2007; Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015) as well as the use of praise as it motivates EFL learners' writing in English (e.g. Lee, 2010). A further advantage of feedback comes when it is given in electronic form, as raised by Hyland (2003), for it brings with it the potential to speed up the process considerably in comparison to non-computer-mediated environments, where more time needs to be invested in the administration of the process, the redistribution of student work and the actual provision of student work and the actual provision of feedback.

As far as feedback through learning technologies is concerned, Ware & Warschauer identified the potential for sharing and peer collaboration, summarising the advantages as follows:

Technology-enhanced environments provide resources for promoting student peer response online in a range of useful ways. Student papers can be made more widely available, and such collaborative effort can foster a sense of community in the classroom. Electronic discourse provides an audience of peers beyond the instructor, which helps heighten awareness of audience and of communicative purpose. (Ware & Warschauer, 2006:110)

However, Hong (2006), based on his study carried out on the perceptions of 22 advanced English major students towards peer feedback in an L2 writing classroom in Hong Kong, found that they gave negative responses towards peer feedback activity. Leki (1990), in trying to understand this response, asserted that peers are not trained teachers and therefore, their comments might turn out to be imprecise and unhelpful. Although the concept of feedback has a positive connotation, it must not be assumed that all are capable of giving positive feedback, nor should it be assumed that the response to feedback will be positive. These were tensions I intended to investigate in this research.

Collaborative Writing: A broad definition of collaborative writing, according to Storch (2013:2), is “the co-authoring of a text by two or more writers.” To date, research in collaborative writing in an EFL context has focused on (1) peer interaction patterns, (2) task types, (3) effects of collaborative writing on EFL learners’ writing development and (3) the use of wiki-based collaborative writing exercises. As explained by Leuf & Cunningham (2001:14), a wiki, created in 1995 by Howard Cunningham, is a web-based tool which has “a freely expandable collection of interlinked Web pages, a hypertext system for storing and modifying information — a database where each page is easily editable by any user with a forms-capable Web browser client.” In the field of second / foreign language writing research, as argued by Godwin-Jones (2003) and Su (2005), a wiki is often used by researchers as a setting for social interaction and collaboration during collaborative writing exercises.

In relation to the existing research on collaborative writing in an EFL context, regarding studies on peer interaction patterns in collaborative writing, Kuiken & Vedder (2002) looked into the effects of Dutch high school EFL learners’ peer interaction on acquiring grammar of the passive form when discussing together in a collaborative writing exercise, which took place in a classroom setting. Storch & Aldosari (2013) investigated how to pair up EFL learners in a classroom-based pair work writing exercise in a Saudi Arabian university. Li & Zhu (2013) examined how EFL learners in a Chinese university interacted with each other when undertaking a wiki-based collaborative writing exercise. Table 2.1 below illustrates a summary of the studies on peer interaction patterns in collaborative writing in an EFL context, identifying the aim of the study, the theoretical underpinnings, methodology, and the key findings.

Table 2.1: Studies regarding peer interaction patterns in collaborative writing

Aim of the Study	Theoretical underpinnings	Methodology	Key Findings
<p>Kuiken & Vedder (2002) investigated the effects of EFL learners' peer interaction on the acquisition of the passive form during a dictogloss exercise.</p>	<p>Noticing hypothesis (Skehan, 1998)</p> <p>Output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1998)</p>	<p>34 EFL students in a Dutch high school (16 and 17 years old) were divided into two groups.</p> <p>20 of the participants were put into an experimental group and 14 were allocated to a controlled one.</p> <p>Two dictogloss writing exercises were implemented in six small groups of three or four on the experimental group.</p> <p>Data was collected from pre- and post-tests and transcriptions of group discussions.</p>	<p>The findings regarding the quantitative data analysis indicated that recognition and frequency of use of the passive form differ depending on the degree to which learners are encouraged to interact with each other.</p> <p>The findings regarding the qualitative data analysis showed that numerous instances of interaction lead to the recognition of the passive form.</p>
<p>Storch & Aldosari (2013) investigated how to pair up EFL learners in a classroom-based pair work writing activity.</p> <p>More specifically, Storch & Aldosari looked into the effect of learners' EFL proficiency and peer interaction patterns during pairing.</p>	<p>Sociocultural theory</p>	<p>30 EFL students in a Saudi Arabian university were first classified by their teacher of English based on their EFL proficiency level, i.e. high, intermediate and low and then paired up into 15 pairs based on three types of pairing (5 pairs in high-high, 5 pairs in low-low and 5 pairs in high-low)</p> <p>Each pair was asked to write a short composition on a given topic.</p> <p>Data were collected from audio-recorded pair talks.</p>	<p>The findings of the study revealed that the pairing depended on the aim of the writing activity.</p> <p>Three peer interaction patterns emerged: 1) collaborative, 2) expert-novice and 3) dominant-passive, which might have greater significance than proficiency pairing.</p>

Li & Zhu (2013) investigated the nature of peer interaction of three groups of three EFL learners when undertaking collaborative writing tasks in the setting of a wiki.	Sociocultural theory	<p>9 EFL students in a Chinese university attending the study were grouped in three self-selected groups of three.</p> <p>Three collaborative writing tasks (narration, exposition, and argumentation) were implemented.</p> <p>The participants' EFL proficiency ranged between the intermediate and upper-intermediate levels.</p> <p>Three hours of training before the writing exercise were given to the participants. The study took place in the setting of a wiki.</p> <p>Data were collected from wiki pages and semi-structured interviews.</p>	<p>Analyses of data from the wiki pages for each group revealed that they engaged in three distinct patterns of peer interaction during the collaborative writing activities: (1) collectively contributing, (2) authoritative-responsive, and (3) dominant-withdrawn.</p> <p>Analyses of semi-structured interview transcripts revealed that the collectively contributing (mutually supportive group) reported the most learning opportunities.</p>
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As to studies on task types in collaborative writing, Garcia Mayo (2002) investigated the use of two formed-focus collaborative writing tasks (dictogloss and text construction) among EFL learners, whilst Aydin & Yildiz (2014) examined the use of three collaborative writing tasks (argumentative, informative and decision-making) among EFL learners in the setting of a wiki. Table 2.2 below illustrates a summary of studies on task types in collaborative writing in an EFL context, again indicating the aim of the study, the theoretical underpinnings, methodology and the key findings.

Table 2.2: Studies regarding task types in collaborative writing

Aim of the Study	Theoretical underpinnings	Methodology	Key Findings
<p>Garcia Mayo (2002) examined the use of two formed-focus collaborative writing tasks (dictogloss and a text construction) among EFL learners.</p>	<p>Sociocultural theory</p>	<p>14 EFL learners in a Spanish university were paired up in five female-female and two male-male pairs.</p> <p>The participants' English proficiency ranged between upper-intermediate and advanced levels.</p> <p>Two collaborative writing activities (dictogloss and text construction) were implemented in a classroom setting.</p> <p>Data were collected from audio-recorded pair talks.</p>	<p>The findings of the study revealed that EFL learners' focus on language features in the collaborative writing activity were concerned with activity type.</p> <p>For example, participants focused on language features more during the text re-construction task than the dictogloss activity. In the dictogloss activity, the participants focused more on producing coherent writing.</p>
<p>Aydin & Yildiz (2014) investigated the use of three collaborative writing tasks (argumentative, informative and decision-making) among EFL learners in the setting of a wiki.</p>	<p>Sociocultural theory</p>	<p>34 (16 females, 18 males) EFL learners in a Turkish university were randomly assigned to groups of four. All the participants' English proficiency was intermediate level.</p> <p>Three collaborative writing activities were implemented (argumentative, informative and decision-making). Data were collected from wiki-pages and face-to-face semi-structured focus group interviews.</p>	<p>The findings of the study showed that the argumentative collaborative writing task promoted more peer feedback than the informative and decision-making writing tasks.</p> <p>Moreover, the informative writing task enabled more self-corrections in writing than the other two exercises.</p>

Regarding the studies on the effects of classroom-based collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing development, Shehadeh (2011) examined EFL learners' writing development at a university in the United Arab Emirates. Table 2.3 provides a summary of this study, indicating once again the aim, theoretical underpinnings, methodology, and the key findings.

Table 2.3: Studies regarding the effects of collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing development

Aim of the Study	Theoretical underpinnings	Methodology	Key Findings
<p>Shehadeh (2011) investigated the effects of classroom-based collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing development.</p>	<p>Social constructivist theory</p>	<p>38 EFL learners at a university in the United Arab Emirates.</p> <p>18 of the participants were in the experimental group and 20 were in the control one.</p> <p>Participants' EFL proficiency was considered to be low-intermediate.</p> <p>Participants in the control group undertook writing tasks individually over 16 weeks, with a different task being given each week.</p> <p>The participants in the experimental group undertook writing tasks in pairs over 16 weeks, with a different task being given each week. (paragraph writing e.g. describe your house, classroom)</p>	<p>The results of the study indicated that collaborative writing had a significant effect on EFL learners' writing development.</p> <p>Specifically, the effect was significant for content, organization and vocabulary, but not for grammar or mechanics. In addition, most students who undertook collaborative writing exercises found it enjoyable and felt that it contributed to their writing development.</p>

		Data were gathered from pre- and post-tests (both qualitative and quantitative data) and participants' writing.	
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With regard to studies on the use of wiki-based collaborative writing activities, Lund (2008) looked into their implementation in a collaborative writing exercise to promote collective language production in an EFL context. Lin & Yang (2011) probed EFL learners' perceptions of integrating a wiki and peer feedback in collaborative writing. Moreover, Chao & Lo (2011) examined EFL learners' perceptions of a wiki-based collaborative writing. Miyazoe & Anderson (2010) investigated EFL learners' learning perceptions of integrating three online settings: (1) forums, (2) weblog and (3) a wiki in collaborative writing. Kessler (2009) examined student-initiated attention to language form in wiki-based collaborative writing among EFL learners. Table 2.4 below shows a summary of studies on use of wikis in collaborative writing in an EFL context, depicting the aim of the study, theoretical underpinnings, methodology, and the key findings.

Table 2.4: Studies regarding use of a wiki in collaborative writing

Aim of the Study	Theoretical underpinnings	Methodology	Key Findings
Lund (2008) examined the implementation of a wiki in a collaborative writing exercise to promote collective language production in an EFL context.	Sociocultural theory	31 EFL learners (17 years old) in a Norwegian high school undertook a collaborative writing (a composition topic) both in pairs or in small groups using a wiki. Participants used both spoken and written discussions when undertaking the collaborative writing exercise.	The study findings show that EFL learners during the collaborative writing activity created tensions between their individual and collective practices.

		Data were collected from nine video typed lessons, wiki pages and one open-ended questionnaire.	
Lin & Yang (2011) explored EFL learners' perceptions of integrating a wiki and peer feedback into an English language course.	Sociocultural theory	<p>32 EFL learners at a Taiwanese university were first asked to write individually on a writing topic and then they were asked to give feedback to each other in pairs in the setting of a wiki.</p> <p>The participants' English proficiency ranged between intermediate and upper intermediate levels.</p> <p>The data were collected from one qualitative questionnaire, the teacher's reflective logs as well as semi-structured and focus group interviews.</p>	The findings of the study revealed that most of the EFL learners had positive experiences from undertaking a writing exercise using a wiki and carrying out peer feedback.
Chao & Lo (2011) examined EFL learners' perceptions of wiki-based collaborative writing.	Social constructivist theory	<p>51 EFL learners at a Taiwanese university were grouped were asked to write a story script in self-selected groups of four or five (in total 14 groups) over five weeks in the setting of a wiki.</p> <p>Participants were asked to write in five stages: (1) collaborative planning, (2) drafting, (3) peer revising, (4) peer editing, and (5) publishing over five weeks during the writing activity.</p>	The findings of the study revealed that a high percentage of EFL learners reported positive views on undertaking a wiki-based collaborative writing exercise.

		Data were collected from one quantitative and three qualitative (open-ended) questionnaires.	
Miyazoe & Anderson (2010) examined EFL learners' perceptions of integrating three online settings (forum, weblog and a wiki) when undertaking collaborative writing.	Social constructivist theory	<p>61 EFL learners at a Japanese university were asked to undertake three collaborative writing exercises in three different online settings (forum, blog and a wiki) in groups.</p> <p>Writing tasks that were used for forum was topical discussion, whilst for the blog, free writing was the activity and for the wiki, translation from English to Japanese from the course textbook's 'mini-reading' section was deployed.</p> <p>Data were collected from one quantitative questionnaire, one interview with 18 participants and their writings.</p>	<p>Analyses of the questionnaire indicated that the EFL learners had positive views on the implemented online settings. The wiki was considered by the participants to be the most favoured, this was followed by the weblog and forum.</p> <p>Analyses of the EFL learners' writings in each online setting showed that the learners showed progress in their writing development.</p> <p>Analyses of the interview transcripts showed that the EFL learners learnt new aspects from each writing activity in the different settings and they reported that they had fun during the three writing activities.</p>
Kessler (2009) explored student-initiated attention to form in wiki-based collaborative writing among EFL learners.	Littlewood's (1996) framework of learner autonomy	40 EFL learners at a Mexican university worked in small groups to undertake a collaborative writing activity over 15 weeks in the setting of a wiki.	The study findings showed that the EFL learners' had the tendency to focus on meaning rather than form when undertaking a collaborative writing exercise.

		The participants had video and voice interactions as well as written interactions.	
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The above cited studies on collaborative writing in an EFL context highlight mainly the following two theoretical frameworks, the: (1) sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978; Storch, 2013) and (2) social constructivist theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Storch, 2005) both being derived from Vygotsky (1978). The main distinction between these two theories is that sociocultural theory centres on the social, cultural and historical contexts where learning can be shaped when learners undertake meaningful joint activities, whereas the latter focuses on social interactions taking place in meaningful joint activities. As described by Vygotsky (1978), social constructivist theory holds that learning is a social activity and a learner develops knowledge through social interaction with others, with learning resulting from social negotiation, social interaction and collaboration. An overview of the studies, although in different contexts of learning, show a high level of positive feedback from the participants on the collaboration and the writing outcomes although the collaboration was not entirely without tensions. For the current research, the social constructivist perceptions of learning were drawn upon. In this research, EFL learners in small groups created knowledge and meaning through social encounters with their group partners in a collaborative online short story writing activity. A few studies have centred on other theoretical frameworks, such as Kuiken & Vedder (2002), who employed a 'noticing hypothesis' (cited in Skehan, 1998), and an 'output hypothesis', as explored by Swain, (1985, 1998) in his study. Kessler's (2009) study integrated Littlewood's (1996) framework of learner autonomy as a theoretical framework.

Storch (2013) stated that that the process-oriented approach is central to collaborative writing exercises. I designed this current research based such an approach as it is concerned with linguistic writing skills, namely planning, revising, drafting and editing, rather than linguistic writing knowledge, i.e. structure and mechanics (Badger & White, 2000). The process-oriented approach concentrates on teaching writing through its process and stages (Belinda, 2006).

Previous studies on collaborative writing in an EFL context were conducted in a classroom setting (e.g. Garcia Mayo, 2002; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Storch & Aldosari, 2013) and in an online one using a wiki (e.g. Lund, 2008; Kessler, 2009; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Chao & Lo, 2011; Lin & Yang, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013), weblog (e.g. Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010) and forum (e.g. Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010). This study differs from these research endeavours in that I implemented a collaborative writing activity in an EFL context in an online social networking setting using a Facebook group. This current research has involved investigating two groups of three Turkish public high school EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration in online short story writing and these learners' perceptions on the impacts on peer collaboration on their writing development in English during online short story writing. The literature on collaborative writing in the EFL context, so far, has seemingly overlooked interpretations of peer collaboration within collaborative writing exercises by EFL learners and their perceptions about impacts such collaboration on these learners' writing development in English. Consequently, so as to fill the gap in research, I undertook this current work.

To recap, methodologically, as explained and justified in Chapter 3 (see section 3.2), this current research was designed as a qualitative study. A pilot study impacted on the methodology of the current research's main study in terms of (1) the design and implementation of the writing exercise (collaborative online short story writing), (2) determining sample size, (3) formulating the research questions and (4) the trialling methods. In the main study, the six volunteers were asked to write a short story in English over 7 weeks in 10 sessions in their Facebook groups. They discussed, in Turkish and in a written form so as to produce a short story in English. Only during the first session of the writing exercise and at the beginning of the second, did the participants receive some teacher / facilitator guidance from me. In the following sessions, the participants produced their short stories with their group partners with little teacher/facilitator guidance, thus providing opportunities for peer collaboration. In the following, I outline studies on peer collaboration in small group learning in various aspects such as teaching and learning issues in small groups, leadership styles, using ICT to enhance teaching and learning and peer affective factors which are of significance to my study.

2.6 Understanding peer collaboration in small group learning

2.6.1 Teaching and learning issues in small groups

Whilst ‘teaching and learning’ is a vast topic, it is important to situate my research in a relevant teaching and learning framework, that of peer teaching. This is because, in my research, I allowed my participants to set up the context of learning largely by themselves in order to work in small groups in an online learning setting, with little facilitator support from me. In what follows, I will review selected studies pertinent to the practice of students adopting the roles of facilitators. According to Damon & Phelps (1989) when one learner instructs another learner in some substantive way, the first acts as an expert and the second as a novice. This is a concept that resonates with the work of Vygotsky (1978) who asserted that when learners scaffold each other, they modify a task and offer assistance to each other to help complete the task. This concept has been extended and labelled in different ways depending on context and includes ‘peer teaching’ (Bradford- Watts, 2011) and ‘peer tutoring’ (Wagner, 1982; Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2001). Britz, Dixon & McLaughlin (1989) developed the terms of ‘partner learning’, ‘peer learning’, and ‘student-teach-student’. In this thesis, I chose to label this concept as peer teaching as it fits best the research and my findings.

Boud, Cohen & Sampson (2001) listed the advantages of peer teaching for students’ learning from their research findings, all of which have resonance in my study:

- peer teaching affords students with opportunities to learn from the knowledge and experience of those similar to themselves (same age, same group, comparable status),
- it provides learners with ways to teach each other and to learn in both formal and informal ways,
- it is mutually beneficial and involves the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience between the participants from a comparable status of knowledge and role,
- it places a strong emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving and the construction of knowledge.

Nunan (2004:8), emphasises the focus on learning in the peer teaching arrangement, as two sides of a stone, and describes peer teaching as a “learning-centred” approach to teaching and learning since this approach enables learners to actively be involved in their learning such as making decisions and plans during the learning processes.

In the field of EFL, and of considerable relevance to my study, I find the study of Altschuler (2001) useful, conducted with Taiwanese EFL learners to enhance their presentation and speaking skills with a speaking activity called ‘Ask the Expert’. First, Altschuler assigned presentation topics (e.g. to find out about tourist activities in a certain country) for each student to research as homework. In the lesson, Altschuler divided the classroom into small groups. In groups, students took turns to become experts and accept questions from their group partners. The findings of Altschuler’s study showed that the activity enabled students to become independent and active learners in terms of obtaining information by themselves without depending on their teacher. Also the study found that as students spoke within a small group, this reduced students’ anxiety in speaking and increased their confidence to speak in English.

Assinder’s (1991) study focused on how EFL learners prepare video materials to teach vocabulary, grammar and listening to their peers. In the study, Assinder aimed at encouraging EFL learners to develop autonomy and take responsibility for their own learning. Assinder recruited 12 EFL learners for the study and divided them into small groups of three. Assinder then asked the participants to prepare video material about either vocabulary or grammar or some listening practice for their peers, at the same time preparing a worksheet to practise and support the teaching during the lessons. Once the participants had prepared the video materials and worksheets, in turn, each week, one participant in the group took the role of a teacher and this cycle continued until all participants had completed their task as a peer teacher. By the end of the study, in the light of the participants’ recounting of the peer teaching, Assinder concluded that these EFL learners had increased their motivation and participation in leaning and increased their responsibility for their own learning and commitment to the course. The EFL learners also increased their confidence and respect for each other.

Mennim (2012) conducted a peer teaching project among EFL learners in a Japanese university to explore the feasibility of engaging students in creating teaching materials and to then teach their peers in the role of a teacher. In the study, participants were asked

to produce and teach a thirty-minute lesson with a self-selected topic in English to the whole class. The participants' reflections on the peer teaching showed positive effects on their speaking and presentation skills. It was also found that based on the participants' recounting, participants gained considerable awareness of the new teaching role of being a peer teacher.

In a comparative study, in Biology classes in a high school context, Tessier's (2006) study revealed that students teaching their peers in small groups helped them improve their learning compared to traditional-based teacher-led lessons. Ten Cate & Durning's (2007) study indicated that peer teaching which takes place in an informal setting was effective when the teacher showed emotional support for the learners lending weight to Cooper's (2003) assertion that the human, caring side of teacher/student interaction can support the collaborative work and the caring environment.

Topping (2005:637) also comments on the potential power of the affective component in peer learning (in pairs, but relevant to the groups of three in my study):

A trusting relationship with a peer who holds no position of authority might facilitate self- disclosure of ignorance and misconception, enabling subsequent diagnosis and correction. The helpers' modelling of enthusiasm and competence, and the possibility of success can influence the self- confidence of the helped whilst a sense of loyalty and accountability to each other might help to keep the pair motivated and on task.

In the EFL studies cited, the peer teaching approach fostered an increase in confidence and in the authentic use of English as the target language, a situation that was reflected in my study that has an EFL context.

2.6.2 Leadership styles

There is a vast literature on the subject of leadership styles in the field of education as reviewed by, for example, Davies & West-Burnham (2003) and Earley & Weindling (2004). In this section, I first focus on two leadership styles: instructional leadership and shared leadership. I then link these leadership styles to peer leadership that emerged as one of the key issues in this current study. Much of the leadership discussion in educational terms is related to principals, head teachers and more recently to teachers

in leadership roles, although there are studies relating to peer leadership often in the context of social study contexts. There is a body of literature pertaining to peer assessment in Higher Education such as the review by Falchikov & Goldfinch (2000) that makes some reference to peer leadership in pair and group work activities as do studies of peer learning as in the review by Boud, Cohen & Sampson (2014).

Instructional leadership

According to Jenkins (2009), the concept of instructional leadership which has been mostly associated with school principals, first emerged in early 80s. Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress (2003) assert that today's principals have been motivated to become more active instructional leaders due to the standards and accountability movement and the recognition by principals of their key role in this. This has led to principals using their own instructional skills and knowledge of teaching and learning as 'leaders of learning' (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Flath (1989) asserted that school principals who act as instructional leaders involve themselves in setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating the teaching in order to enable students to enhance their learning. Blase & Blase (2000) describe the specific behaviours of instructional leadership in more collaborative terms as making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching. In Whitaker's study (1997) conducted among secondary school principals, four skills essential for instructional leaders were identified in the need to be: (1) resource providers, (2) instructional providers (in the sense that teachers count on their principals to be sources of information on current trends and effective instructional practices), (3) good communicators and (4) able to create a visible presence.

Hopkins describes the instructional leadership process thus:

'From this perspective, a teacher promotes student learning by being active in planning and organising his or her teaching, explaining to students what they are to learn, arranging occasions for guided practice, monitoring and providing feedback, and otherwise helping students understand and accomplish work' (2003:62)

Hopkins writes that the instructional perspective reflects: ‘not just induction into knowledge but the acquisition of a range of learning skills that allow the learner, be they student or teacher to take more control of their world’ (ibid: 62). The group leaders, as they gained confidence in their leadership, increasingly supported collaboration through feedback, modelling and suggesting resource ideas: they developed a peer instructional leadership style that was exponentially negotiated, empowering and shared.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership envisages leadership as a shared and collective endeavour where: ‘people work together and learn together, where they construct and refine meaning leading to a shared purpose or set of goals’ (Harris 2003:75). However, sharing invariably involves problematic negotiation and power -relations that are always at the heart of the process according to Abbott (2014). Boardman (2001), for example, investigating shared leadership processes in Tasmanian schools, found that leaders were significantly more enthusiastic about a shared leadership model than the teachers they engaged with. Furthermore, in a study in New Zealand primary schools, Court (2003:161) found the presence of power struggles and the notion of “contrived collegiality,” which refers to the manipulation teachers feel when forced to participate in decision-making without any guarantee their ideas will be heard. Hall (2001) argued that with shared leadership, it is crucial that group members understand their individual roles and do not underestimate the complexity of a shared leadership arrangement. It was therefore important in my study to create the conditions for a successful negotiation of roles in a participatory process.

Peer Leadership

In the writing on peer learning and assessment in higher education, there is limited reference to aspects of peer leadership. In this current study, the issue of needing to elect a group leader arose with the participants during the online short story writing activity and I termed this peer leadership. As asserted by Li & Zhu (2013), in collaborative writing in an EFL context this is where one group partner takes the most control during exercise and the other member(s) acknowledge him/her as the group leader. According to Storch (2002) and Storch & Aldosari (2013), there are two types of peer leadership styles: (1) expert and (2) dominant. Whereas Li & Zhu (2013) identified (1) authoritative

and (2) dominant types of peer collaboration during joint EFL writing.

Regarding the expert style of peer leadership, Storch (2002) and Storch & Aldosari (2013) contended that such group leaders provide assistance or scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) that will help the other group partner(s) learn through interaction. The group partner(s) who were assisted by expert group leaders were named by Storch (2002) and Storch & Aldosari (2013) as novice group partners. Expert and novice derive from Vygotsky's concept of ZPD. As explained by Storch (2002) and Storch & Aldosari (2013), expert group partner support in a writing activity has been referred to in the literature as scaffolding. This metaphor refers to the actions of the group partner who takes a more leading role in the writing, helps the novice group partner(s) accomplish the tasks in a writing exercise and provides information that enables the novice group partner(s) to perform the tasks independently. By contrast, Li & Zhu reported from their research that there was no one clearly identifiable expert member in their study. They found group leaders who promoted collective peer leadership and enabled their group partners to scaffold each other's efforts in the collaborative writing activity. Consequently, they termed this collective peer leadership style 'authoritative peer leadership' and called the other group partner(s) 'responsive' (ibid.).

In a study by Chao & Lo (2011), all 14 groups of four to five (in total fifty-one) participants selected a group leader among their group partners, all the participants being allowed to choose their group partners themselves. However, in their study, little information was provided about the styles of group leaders during the collaborative writing activity. In a similar study by Lan, Sung & Chang (2006), but focused on peer collaboration with regard to reading in an EFL context using mobile devices, it was found that group leaders in small reading groups were willing to help their group partners and provide necessary peer support (e.g. helping their group partners to learn) as well as during peer feedback during the collaborative reading exercises.

Peer leadership styles in groups

Within the wide canon of literature on the subject of group leadership, I find the study by Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002) a useful starting point in the context of my study. Goleman et al (ibid.) identified six group leadership styles in a study of leaders in a consulting firm, namely: (1) commanding, (2) visionary, (3) affiliative, (4)

democratic, (5) pace-setting and (6) coaching. Goleman et al. (2002) explained that, first, commanding group leaders demand compliance from their group partners, taking a “do what I say” leadership approach. Second, visionary group leaders motivate their group partners towards a vision, exercising a “come with me” leadership approach. Third, affiliative group leaders create emotional bonds and harmony among their group partners, exhibiting a “people come first” stance. Fourth, democratic group leaders build consensus through participation and collective development of decisions in the form of teamwork, taking a “what do you think?” leadership manner. Fifth, pace-setting group leaders set high standards for performance from their group partners, engaging in a “do as I do now” leadership approach. Sixth, coaching group leaders develop their group partners for the future thus aiming to improve their performance or develop long term strengths and they adopt a “try this” peer leadership style.

One practical dimension of leadership concerns leaders encouraging the use of various resources that would include various applications of mobile phones and PCs, and it is to the field of ICT that I turn next.

2.6.3 Using ICT to enhance teaching and learning

ICT in education is now ubiquitous, if not altogether uncontested. Thorne & Black (2007:149) in relation to the pervasiveness of ICT, assert that: ‘Internet-mediated communication is now high stakes environment that pervades work, education, interpersonal communication, and intimate relationship building and maintenance.’ As described by Fu (2013) ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in educational settings includes computers, mobile / smart phones, radio, television, satellite systems and the Internet. According to Shelley, White, Baumann and Murphy (2006) the implementation of ICT in educational settings has led to the emergence of new teaching and learning environments and methodologies (e.g. e-learning, online learning, blended learning). Duffy & Cunningham (1996:181-182) argue that learning through ICT is ‘... a social, dialogical process of construction by distributed, multidimensional selves using tools and signs within context created by the various communities with which they interact’. In this study, ICT was employed to facilitate small group collaborative writing activity in an online social networking setting, Facebook, and undertaken outside of lesson hours in a context created by the participants. Six participants in two groups of three used either their computers or smart

phones to engage and interact in the writing activity over a period of time.

In chapter one, I referred to Turkey, where the study is based, that is ranked number 7 with roughly 23.5 million Facebook users according to Quintly (2013) and as pointed out by Demirtas (2012) about 50 % the online social networking users in Turkey are documented as being children between 9 and 16. Moreover, Facebook as previously mentioned was the social medium of choice for my research. Mazman & Usluel (2010) conducted a study on how 606 Turkish Facebook users between the ages of 18 and 25 years used the social networking site Facebook for educational purposes. Mazman & Usluel suggested on the basis of the findings from their study that Facebook has three main types of educational functions: communication, collaboration and resource/material sharing. In educational contexts, Facebook has been found to be a useful setting to improve interaction between teachers and their students (Godwin-Jones, 2008; Sturgeon & Walker, 2009). Of considerable significance for my study, Blattner & Fiori (2009) investigated how Facebook groups might enhance French as a foreign language learners' use of the target language. Blatter & Fiori examined the written discussion threads of the Facebook groups created for French language learning. Participants of the study were from various countries such as Argentina and Colombia. Baltter & Fiori's study revealed three benefits of the use of Facebook groups in foreign language learning:

- Facebook groups enhance the language learner's socio-pragmatic awareness of the target language.
- Facebook groups introduce the learners to realistic and authentic language and encourage them to use it.
- Facebook groups show the learners that foreign language learning and practice can take place out of classroom foreign language learning environment.

In a study by Kitsis (2008) Facebook was utilised as a setting where high school students undertook their English subject assignments and gave feedback to each other. Kitsis described how, first, students were asked to post their assignments on a Facebook group and later have an assigned peer provide feedback. Kitsis' study showed that the Facebook group had a positive effect on motivation and increased the students' engagement to undertake their assignments. In the research of O' Hanlon (2007) Facebook was

integrated into the research to create a setting to support beginner writers. O'Hanlon's study findings revealed that students tended to write more carefully when they knew that their work would be published.

Chen & Yang (2007) examined Taiwanese EFL learners' perceptions on online English learning course. In the study of Chen & Yang, 44 Taiwanese high school EFL learners were learning English through an online English learning course. The course aimed at improving the learners' speaking, reading and writing skills and including activities such as writing an e-mail, designing a homepage in English, and discussing a topic in English through online discussion chat or video chat. The study showed that the online English learning course facilitated foreign language learning and enabled learners to have a more enjoyable time and feel less stressed when learning the target language. Moreover, Kendle & Northcote's (2000) study revealed that discussion in online groups and searching online information provided opportunities for learners to learn useful skills implicitly. This was because there was more feedback during discussion and communication in online situations because of the high level of confidence felt by the learners in this setting.

A handful of studies in EFL/ESL learning contexts have shown that social networking sites have considerable potential to enhance learners' learning performance, strengthen their motivation and foster collaboration as well as autonomy in learning (Collins & Halverson, 2009; Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010; Pasfield-Neofitou, 2011).

Regarding the affective influence of the use of Facebook on learning, Kabilan et al (2010) investigated how Facebook groups can support, enhance and/or strengthen Malaysian university students' English language development. 300 undergraduate ESL students in a Malaysian university were involved in the study and it was found that Facebook groups developed the participants' self-confidence in ESL writing as a by-product of their online socialisation such as sharing views and exchanging ideas on Facebook. In a study by Shih (2011), Facebook was used as a setting to enhance Taiwanese EFL learners' writing skills through peer feedback. Twenty-three participants from a Taiwanese university (first year undergraduate students) were divided into six groups and a group leader was assigned by the researcher for each group to lead the group. Participants were asked to post their writing assignments weekly over 8 weeks in their groups and required to provide feedback and comments to their group partners. The study findings showed that

peer feedback sessions conducted in the setting of Facebook increased participants' interest and motivation in learning. Moreover, according to Shih, participants' friendship, communication and sense of trust were enhanced through Facebook-based peer feedback sessions. Yunus & Selahi (2012) conducted a study to investigate the use of Facebook groups in enhancing the writing skills of 43 ESL learners in a Malaysian university. The study findings showed some aspects of affective influence in the Facebook groups on the participants' writing development. For example, some participants felt encouraged when their partners liked their ideas and opinions, felt comfortable discussing the writing activity on the FB group instead of classroom setting, and felt comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions with their partners. Although Mazer, Murphy & Simonds' (2007) study was not in the field of EFL, the study utilised Facebook to motivate successfully the learners in their learning. Altiner (2011) suggests that technology-enhanced communication has increased learners' motivation towards foreign language learning due to multimedia capabilities such as pictures, videos and audio resources. Frith (2005) asserts that this approach to learning has facilitated learner independence towards foreign language learning due to a proliferation of pair/ group work activities undertaken in online social networking sites such as Facebook, where learners feel themselves comfortable.

To conclude, the studies reviewed show evidence of favourable outcomes when ICT especially the use of Facebook was fully integrated into their foreign language learning. The studies testify to the power of the use of Facebook in motivating learners in collaborative learning, in promoting affective skills and confidence as well as decreasing stress and anxiety. The studies also indicated evidence of more 'careful' and confident writing.

2.6.4 Peer affective factors

In this current study, the importance of peer affective factors was observed amongst the participants during the online short story writing activity. Before outlining previous studies on peer affective factors in peer collaboration, I first draw on Vygotsky's (1986) views on affective aspects of learning. He held that cognition and affect are indistinguishably interconnected to each other, as he exemplifies in his assertion:

When we approach the problem of the interrelation between thought and

language and other aspects of mind, the first question that arises is that of intellect and affect. Their separation as subjects of study is a major weakness of traditional psychology, since it makes the thought process appear as an autonomous flow of 'thoughts thinking themselves' segregated from the fullness of life, from personal needs and interests, the inclinations and impulses of the thinker (1986:10).

Under the Vygotskian optic, Sthal (2006) viewed cognition as a social process which enables learners to build knowledge and solve problems through group interaction. Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary (1970:15) defined 'affect' as (1): feeling, affection (2): the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily change." According to Shroader & Cahoy (2010), affective domains comprise a learner's attitudes, emotions, interests, motivation, self-efficacy and values. Cooper (2010), who has researched the role and place of empathy (which involves caring and emotions) with school teachers and their students, also emphasised the inextricable interconnection of cognition and affect contending that the two go hand in hand in learning. Cooper's work is relevant in that the groups in my study felt the need to elect a peer leader to take on a leadership and instructional role, indeed a caring role. On this point, Cooper writes that: "Affect is central to communication and the formation of relationships between people" (2010:5).

Previous studies on collaborative writing in an EFL context have mainly centred on cognitive and linguistic aspects of learning. In what follows, I identify certain affective aspects of learning through different types peer collaboration, such as written /oral peer feedback. Even though there have been no studies on collaborative writing in an EFL context focusing on peer affective factors in peer collaboration, there are a few studies on peer feedback in this context, particularly in relation to writing (e.g. Kurt & Atay, 2007; Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015; Lee, 2010) and in speaking as well as oral peer feedback on collaborative presentation (Nguyen, 2013).

Kurt & Atay (2007) investigated the effects of peer feedback on the writing anxiety of prospective Turkish teachers of EFL. A total of 86 university students who were being trained to be teachers of the subject at a Turkish university participated in the study over eight weeks. They were divided into experimental and controlled groups. Those in the

experimental group received training for peer feedback and they were asked to work in pairs during their writing course, giving feedback on each other's essays and discussing this with each other before submitting their work to their tutors. On the other hand, the participants in the controlled group received only teacher feedback on their essays. Data were gathered using a second language writing anxiety inventory by Cheng (2004) and interviews carried out with the participants. The findings revealed that quantitative data from the inventory showed that the peer feedback group experienced significantly less writing anxiety than the teacher feedback group at the end of the study. Qualitative data from the interviews revealed that the participants benefited from the peer feedback process as through this they became aware of their mistakes. Moreover, during the process they received opinions from their partners on which they could elaborate and this collaboration helped them look at their essays from a different perspective.

In another study, Yastibas & Yastibas (2015) also examined the effects of peer feedback on Turkish EFL learners' writing anxiety. 16 university students at a Turkish university participated in the study over eight weeks. During the first two weeks, the participants were trained in how to give peer feedback and over the following six weeks, they gave it to their peers in the writing lessons held each week. The study was designed as mixed methods research. The data gathered from the participants comprised the same second language writing inventory by Cheng (2004), interviews with the participants and the researchers' diary. The findings revealed that the use of peer feedback in the writing lessons decreased participants' writing anxiety and increased their self-confidence as well as helping them to improve their writing development in English by learning from each other.

Lee (2010) conducted research on written peer feedback in an EFL writing context, which was aimed at investigating three different types: (1) praise, (2) criticism and (3) suggestion. 15 first-year university students at a Japanese university participated in this study over 14 weeks. They were asked to write an assignment over the fourteen weeks and each week, they were instructed to review their peers' writings. Their written feedback was collected and analysed based on Hyland & Hyland's (2001) classification system of peer feedback in terms of praise, criticism and suggestion, definitions of these were provided previously under peer feedback (see subsection 2.4.1). The study findings indicated that a high percentage of the feedback given took the form of

suggestions and a low percentage was praise. According to Lee's interpretation of the findings, many participants did not feel confident about praising their peers due to lack of experience and knowledge about peer feedback.

The issue of language competence in English is of relevance in respect of giving feedback since it is important to recognise the difficulty that students can have when they are asked to converse in English. As argued by Storch (2013), the use of EFL learners' L1 may need to be allowed during peer collaboration in writing activities. She highlighted that when working in pairs / small groups in writing, EFL learners may need to use their L1, because they have limited English knowledge to speak or feel awkward having to speak in English with their peers. Polio & Duff (1994), on the other hand, examined usage of English in FL classrooms at a university in the US and one of their key findings was that its engagement in such scenarios enabled learners to build a rapport between their peers and their teacher.

Even though my current study focuses on peer collaboration in an EFL writing task, I include Nguyen's (2013) study which examined this for an EFL speaking task, because of what was reported about affective support. More specifically, Nguyen investigated Vietnamese EFL learners' reflections on peer collaboration during a collaborative speaking activity. In the study, 12 participants, who were in their early 20s and studying at a Vietnamese university, were organized into six pairs and asked to prepare an oral presentation with their partners within a week. The data gathered from the participants were derived from interviews and reflective reports. The findings of the study revealed that collaborative pair work created learning conditions where peers provided mutual help. Specifically, one of the key findings of Nyugen's (2013) study showed that collaborative pair work resulted in providing peer affective support, in particular, the giving of motivational phrases (e.g. "don't worry!", "everything will be alright after all") to each other. As claimed by the author, such peer affective support led to the participants supporting each other in ensuring enduring task engagement, building a rapport, increasing self-confidence and feeling a sense of safety when undertaking the pair work activity (ibid).

Dale's (1994) study investigated collaborative writing interactions in a classroom-based group work activity and although being in the context of L1 ninth-grade students, it has some relevance for my study. One of the key findings was that trust and respect among group partners enabled them to feel comfortable with each other when discussing the emerging text, a finding that resonates with those in my research.

Kutnick, Blatchford & Baines (2005), whilst not focusing their research in an EFL context, investigated the grouping of secondary school students (aged between 12-15) in group work activities in a number of subjects (including English, mathematics, science and humanities) in a secondary school in the UK and found that close relationships among group partners were fundamental for effective group working. According to these authors, close friendship based on supportive relationships enabled the students to build upon trust between peers and teachers as well as giving them the ability to communicate effectively and jointly to resolve problems with peers (ibid).

Another study by Kutnick & Kington (2005) investigated whether classroom-based friendship pairing would perform better on cognitive tasks than acquaintance pairings. The participants, who were primary school students from British schools, were first grouped into three pairs of female friends, three pairs of male friends, three pairs of female acquaintances and three pairs of male acquaintances. When pairing these students, their age (5, 8 and 10 years), gender (male and female pairing) and ability level (teacher assessed high, medium and low) were taken into account. For example, five-year old primary students were selected and put into three pairs of female friends. In each pair represented high, medium and low level rating. Then, each pair of participants was given science reasoning tasks. The findings revealed that the girls' friendship pairing performed at the highest level, whereas boys' friendship pairing came out the lowest. Both girl and boy acquaintance pairing performed at the middle level.

Ucan & Webb (2015) investigated the social regulation of learning during collaborative inquiry learning activities in science lessons in a Turkish primary school. Two groups of three students (aged 12) participated in the study over a seven week period and for both groups, their oral discussions were recorded. In addition, stimulated-recall interviews were conducted with the students and analysed. After the analyses of these data sets, one of the key findings indicated that the use of shared emotional and motivational

regulation was important for sustaining reciprocal interactions and creating a positive socio-emotional atmosphere within the groups. According to Azevedo & Johnson et al (2011), Pintrich (2000) and Winne & Hadwin (2008), the self-regulation of learning is concerned with being actively involved in the learning process as a learner. In such a learning context, learners intentionally set goals and then attempt to plan, monitor and regulate their cognitive, behavioural, motivational and emotional processes in order to reach their goals in learning: social regulation of learning concerns with the learner's social processes in learning. Järvelä & Järvelä (2011) categorized the social aspect of regulation into two: (1) co-regulation and (2) shared regulation. Regarding which, in addition to learners self-regulating their own learning in social learning situations, they can also co-regulate it, such as by supporting/ getting support from another learner or they can have shared regulation where more than one learner regulates their activity collectively in order to reach a shared goal.

Anderson & Simpson (2004) examined student perceptions of the use of both online small group discussions and online whole class discussions in terms of its value for learning and for peer affective support. Participants of the study were students who attended online teacher education course. What Anderson & Simpson meant by peer affective support was the development of a culture of emotional support and care and a feeling of being part of a community. Data were gathered from surveys and online discussion threads. The findings of the study revealed that in online small group discussions, participants of the study built a strong sense of community with more affective support than online whole class discussions, an important finding for this research. Also, in online small group discussions, participants reflected that they found motivation to continue engagement with the group.

Preece (2000) highlighted that successful online communities in learning seeks to encourage the development of common ground, foster trust, and attract people with similar interests leading to stability, familiarity and strong emotional involvement and low levels of hostility. Shulman (1987) focused on the use and misuse of process in the teaching of group work practice, highlights a number of 'mutual aid' processes that occur in the classroom. The tendency of students to help each other can be harnessed, he argues, to advantage in any classroom. Mutual aid processes include situations where students share knowledge, deal effectively with taboo areas, provide each other with

emotional support, discover mutuality of feelings, doubts, worries etc., solve problems and rehearse solutions and act collectively to make demands or challenge the instructor. Using Keller's Model of Motivation (1987), Jones & Issroff (2005) categorised four dimensions of affective factors in computer-supported collaborative learning. These are: (1) curiosity, (2) challenge, (3) confidence, and (4) control. To explain these affective factors briefly, curiosity means arousing learners' curiosity to enable them to explore new areas of the subject and find sensible explanations. Challenge involves providing moderate levels of risk and uncertain outcomes to motivate learners to engage with the materials. Confidence includes selecting tasks according to learners' previous achievements. Control contains promoting ownership of learning by allowing learners to choose tasks and set goals to achieve, factors that mesh with previous comment on instructional leadership, a mode of leadership adopted by the peer leaders in my research.

Kathpalia & Heah (2008) examined the self-reflection of science students in a Singaporean university to identify and illustrate the affective dimensions of learning during writing courses. The findings of the Kathpalia & Heah's study revealed that affective factors were grouped in three categories as (1) being self-oriented (e.g. like/dislike, enjoyment, satisfaction, surprise, challenge, confidence), (2) task-oriented (e.g. easy/difficult, useful), and (3) tutor oriented (e.g. appreciation, praise).

Camaraderie and all that was involved in developing a friendship was found to be an important factor in my study. Vass (2002) examined friendship in computer-supported collaborative creative writing activities among primary school students. The study of Vass found out that during the collaborative dialogues among peers when undertaking the writing activities, friendship had benefits on students' writing development. Although examining the beneficial impact of friendship on writing outcomes was not part of my study, it came out clearly that the participants' self-perception was that their friendship and collaborative working style was beneficial to their writing. Jones & Pellegrini's (1996) study investigated the effects of friendship on first-grade students' writing narratives. They found that participants' interaction with their friends during collaborative story writing activities had a facilitating effect on participants' written narratives compared to when they are undertaking individual writing activities. Another study on friendship among children in a collaborative learning context by Hartup (1996)

showed that children had emotional commitments towards their friends and when working together they were motivated to reduce any conflicts with their friends in order to complete the task successfully.

I have reviewed studies that have investigated peer affective factors in collaborative learning contexts. In the field of EFL, particularly on writing, the studies of Kurt & Atay's (2007) study and Yastlibas & Yastibas (2015) study revealed that peer feedback had a facilitating effect on EFL learners' writing anxiety. In speaking, Nyugen (2013) found that the use of motivational phrases when working together in pairs for the task enabled participants to create emotionally supportive environment where they engaged with the task, built a rapport, felt comfortable and increased their self-confidence. In contrast, Lee's (2010) showed that the percentage of use of praise during peer feedback in writing activities was low because many EFL learners participating in the study appeared less confident with their English competence, and therefore shunned using praise. Other studies highlighted focused on the dimension of peer affective factors in collaborative learning contexts outside the field of EFL highlighted trust and respect among learners in pair/group work (e.g. Dale, 1994), and the positive effects of friendship on collaborative learning (e.g. Kutnick et al, 2005; Kutnick & Kington, 2005; Vass, 2002; Jones & Pellegrini, 1996; Hartup, 1996). I end with the powerful conclusion of Hartup (1996;1) from his study on the effect of friendship in collaborative learning which was that 'friends provide one another with cognitive and social scaffolding' that leads to the next section.

2.6.5 Collectively contributing

In the current study, the concept of collectively contributing was engaged in by the participants towards the end of their online short story writing exercise. According to Storch (2002), Storch & Aldosari (2013) and Li & Zhu (2013), collaborative or the collectively contributing type of peer collaboration in pair / group writing exercise refers to all members of the group working jointly and contribute equally.

Storch (2013) wrote that roles and contributions to the production of a text are not split up in in a collaborative writing activity, because according to her, peer collaboration in writing should have "a shared and negotiated decision making process and a shared

responsibility for the production of a single text” Storch (2013:3). However, when Storch (2002) investigated peer interaction patterns in a pair work writing activity that took place in a classroom setting among ESL learners (mostly international students) at an Australian university, she found that not all learners worked collaboratively on the activity. The findings of Storch (2002) revealed four types of peer interaction patterns (1) collaborative, (2) expert–novice, (3) dominant-passive, and (4) dominant-dominant. As explained by the author, first, the collaborative type involves a pair working jointly on all parts of a writing exercise actively engaging with each other’s ideas. The second peer interaction pattern, expert-novice, pertains to when during a pair work writing exercise one member (expert) takes more control over the writing exercise and encourages the other (novice) to take part. According to Storch’s explanation, the expert member provides assistance (e.g. providing explanations on a grammar topic) that helps the novice member(s) to learn. The third peer interaction pattern, dominant-passive was explained as being where in a pair work writing activity, one member (dominant) takes an authoritarian stance and the other (passive) remains passive, making few contributions throughout the exercise. The final (the fourth) peer interaction pattern, dominant-dominant was defined as when during a pair work writing exercise, even though both members contribute to the writing exercise, there is an unwillingness / inability to work together, for example, both members might have difficulties in reaching consensus due to a high level of disagreement (ibid).

Storch (2002) conducted her study with 10 pairs and she allowed her participants to pair choose their partners. She gave three largely grammar-based writing exercises and asked that two be done in pairs and one was to be undertaken individually in a classroom setting. The researcher audio-recorded the participants’ discussions during the pair work activities. The data gathered from the participants were verbal pair discussions, writings from the exercises, surveys and field notes. Studies (e.g. Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Li & Zhu, 2013) which focused on investigating peer interaction patterns in a pair/ group writing exercise in a classroom/ online setting in an EFL context based their work on Storch’s (2002) framework of peer interaction patterns in a collaborative writing exercise. For example, Storch & Aldosari (2013) conducted a study to investigate the nature of pair work in an EFL context. The participants were 15 pairs of Saudi Arabian students at a Saudi Arabian college. The pairs were allocated according to similar English proficiency levels (high-high and low-low) and mixed (high-low), with there being five

pairs in each proficiency pairing. All the pairs were asked to write a composition for 20 minutes in a classroom setting, with their discussions being audio recorded and treated as data for the study. The findings of revealed that three peer interaction patterns: (1) collaborative, (2) expert-novice, (3) dominant-passive had been present, according to Storch's (2002) framework regarding peer interaction in pair work writing. To elaborate on the findings, regarding the high- high English proficiency level, three pairs had been collaborative, whereas two pairs had experienced expert-novice peer interaction. As to the low-low proficiency English level, all five pairs had performed collaborative peer interaction. Regarding the mixed proficiency English level pairs, two had exhibited dominant-passive peer interaction and two expert-novice pairs had involved collaborative peer interaction.

Li & Zhu's (2013) study focused on exploring peer interaction patterns during a small group writing exercise using three groups of three Chinese EFL learners at a Chinese university in an online setting (designed for collaborative writing activities), namely, a wiki. The study lasted for 4 weeks. During the first week, the participants attended a face-to-face orientation about the study and the use of wikis. Over the following three weeks, in their groups of three, they undertook three writing activities, one per week, which were: (1) a narrative essay, (2) an expository essay and (3) an argumentative essay. Data gathered from the participants took the form of their written wiki-discussion threads and semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study, based on Storch's framework on peer interaction patterns in a collaborative writing activity, showed that three types of peer interaction patterns had been observed: (1) collectively contributing, (2) authoritative-responsive and (3) dominant-withdrawn. To explain these three peer interaction patterns, first, as pointed out by Li & Zhu (2013), collectively contributing has the same meaning as the collaborative peer interaction pattern. As contended by Storch (2002), collaborative or as Li & Zhu (2013) called collectively contributing means in a collaborative writing is all three group members / both pair members contribute the discussion and production of the writing exercise equally and engage with each other's contribution actively. The second peer interaction pattern, authoritative-responsive, is different to expert-novice, because in Li & Zhu's (2013) study, one group member took more control over the writing activity and yet, did not act as an expert, but rather, as a facilitator. Consequently, these authors termed this peer interaction pattern authoritative- responsive. Regarding the third peer interaction pattern, dominant-

withdrawn, they explained that one member (dominant) in a group took an authoritarian stance during the writing exercise and for this reason, the other two made very few contributions, even the other two members had to withdraw from the writing exercise.

Against a backdrop of research on aspects of collaboration that highlight many positive findings about peer collaboration and feedback, although not devoid of issues concerning, for example, task, type of feedback, gender, uneven contributions, feelings of anxiety, I move now to the conclusion of this chapter.

2.7 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, first, the distinctions between the two terms EFL and ESL were presented, because it is important to situate this research in the appropriate language learning context. Second, I considered the context of EFL writing within the current research and discussed the skill of writing where technical issues predominate. This was followed by an outline of the theoretical underpinnings of the study with a discussion of the theory of social constructivism in relation to the approaches to EFL writing instruction. This theory is useful for the current study, because of its focus on learning through social interactions engendered by the collaborative learning that took place in the online short story writing exercise. Moreover, social constructivism frames the current study because it relates to the encouraging of collaborative activities, collaborative learning, learning through social interaction as well as learning with more capable and knowledgeable peers in a group in meaningful learning contexts. In this research the context was of a collaborative online short story writing activity undertaken in small groups by the participants.

Regarding approaches to EFL writing instruction, I have discussed the following three main approaches: product-oriented, process-oriented genre-oriented. From these three options, I chose the process-oriented approach for the current research for the following reasons: 1) writing is considered as being a creative process, 2) learning is thought to be student-centred, 3) this approach allows students to undertake a recursive model of writing using the framework of planning- composing and revisions, 4) the process of student's writing is more important than their end products and 5) this approach encourages students to engage in peer collaboration during the writing process. In sum,

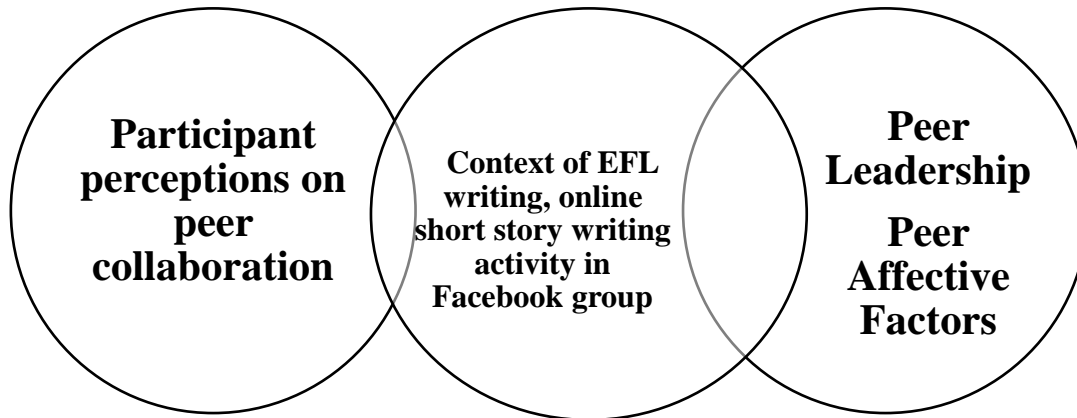
these five assertions have framed the student interactional processes in this study that has sought to research the gaps I identified.

Finally, a review of the empirical studies in the literature pertinent to this study has been delivered in previous research on peer collaboration in EFL writing. In this section, I have considered how the extant studies on peer collaboration in EFL have involved studies of students' brainstorming and peer feedback to collaborative writing. I have explained that I focused on collaborative writing in my study, because no research has been conducted on this among EFL learners from Turkish public high schools before, according to my detailed search. I reviewed eleven studies on collaboration in EFL writing. Among these, three (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Li & Zhu, 2013) focused on peer interaction patterns during a collaborative writing process. Two (Garcia Mayo, 2002; Aydin & Yildiz, 2014), investigated the use of task types in collaborative writing and one (Shehadeh, 2011) explored the effects of collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing development. Five of the studies (Lund, 2008; Kessler, 2009; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Lin & Yang, 2011; Chao & Lo, 2011) looked into the use of wikis in collaborative writing, whilst Miyazoe & Anderson (2010) in addition to this, investigated the use of blog and forum in collaborative writing.

In the later part of the literature reviewed, I favoured the categorization of peer collaboration into EFL writing into three: (1) collectively contributing, (2) peer leadership and (3) peer affective factors, based on the findings of the existing studies and in accordance with the findings that arose from this research (see Chapter 5). I have also cited studies that emphasise the crucial role of affective factors that are central to this research and linked these to Vygotsky's theories. These studies pertain to research on collaborative learning and the positive impact of peer feedback when in a culture of trust and friendship and when learners feeling comfortable with their peers. I have situated these factors within discussions about teaching and learning issues especially where small group work is the main focus and I discussed the role of ICT with special reference to the use of Facebook, a major plank in the lives of Turkish youngsters as I discussed in chapter 1. I identified the role of peer leadership against a backdrop of relevant leadership theories since peer leadership emerged as a crucial finding in this research. Furthermore, the link between peer leadership with peer affective factors that are embedded in much of the literature reviewed will be central to the research process

and the analysis of the process. In sum, the constituent parts of this chapter represent the conceptual frames of this research and are shown diagrammatically in figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework of the study



In the next chapter, I present the aims, design, methods and findings of the pilot study. I also describe how the pilot study informed the methodology for the main study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore the students' perceptions on peer collaboration in the context of a study about how to encourage EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to improve their writing skills in English through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise. I focused on two central aspects as in the following research questions:

1. How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
2. What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

This chapter outlines and justifies the research methodology. I present the study's approach, which is qualitative research. I then describe the research design including the pilot and main study. I provide detailed profiles of the participants in the main study to give a picture of their language learning experiences and perceptions on these since the student voice is central to this thesis. My approach to data analysis follows and then sections on how I ensured the trustworthiness of the research, translation issues and ethical considerations.

3.2 A Qualitative Research Approach

I decided to use a qualitative approach, as this I considered to be consistent with the foci of the present research. In the following, I explain and justify why I chose to employ a qualitative approach for this current research rather than a quantitative approach. Muijs (2004:4) suggests that qualitative and quantitative research approaches are considered as having "two fundamental world views". A qualitative approach holds the view that there are 'multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event' (ibid:9), whereas a quantitative approach argues a more positivist and realist point of view. Merriam (2009:8) for example writes that "reality exists out there and if reality exists 'out there' ... it is observable, stable and measurable". Denzin & Lincoln (2011:8) argue that a

quantitative approach mainly concerns “the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes”. However, Gillham (2000:10) opines that a qualitative approach mainly concerns “processes leading to results (for example, how reading standards were improved in a school) rather than into the ‘significance’ of the results themselves”. Reflecting on these issues, I have been influenced by Merriam’s view of a qualitative approach in that it concerns “understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of the world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009:13). For the current research, I employed a qualitative approach because the central foci of my research is to investigate two group of three EFL learners’ interpretations of peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity and to examine their perceptions on the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity. I was more interested in the process of how peer collaboration was interpreted over a period of time by the participants rather than the measurement and analysis of the writing outcomes of the peer collaboration activity. As commented in chapter one, this interest derived from the small scale study that I undertook for my MA Study where the issue of peer collaboration, especially peer feedback in writing had become the focus of the research based on the Turkish EFL learners’ perceptions from series of interviews. In this research, as a researcher, I aimed to “get under the skin” (Gillham, 2000:10) of participants’ interpretations of peer collaboration and their perceptions on the impacts of peer collaboration in their online short story writing activity over a period of time by locating their voices at the centre of the study.

In choosing a qualitative approach as best fit for purpose of this study, I have however been mindful of the weaknesses identified by researchers in the approach. It has been argued that a qualitative approach in research is inherently subjective (Bell, 2013) and therefore producing valid data reliably may not be possible (Maxwell, 1992). Merriam (2009:214) highlights that the researcher is the “primary instrument of data collection and analysis” and therefore it is the researcher who always interprets and presents the reality. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011:3), a qualitative approach is “a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world and they turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self.” In this current study, I employed mainly focus group discussions and for data triangulation reasons, I employed online one-to-one chats and online discussion boards. These methods were further always supported by the notes I made in my research diary.

A qualitative approach is commonly associated with an interpretive research paradigm, which aims to understand “the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 21). My aim of using such methods was precisely to understand the ‘world of human experience’ of my participants. Interpretive research gives the opportunity to look into the learners’ perceptions in depth and make an insightful analysis of the data obtained (Robson, 1993). For the current research, I approached the understanding from a social constructivist perspective within the interpretive paradigm, which I deemed appropriate with regards to defining the focus of the study and for seeking insightful and robust responses to the research questions. Creswell (2013) describes a social constructive perspective within an interpretative paradigm according to key philosophical assumptions:

- (1) Ontologically, this perspective involves “multiple realities which are constructed through our lived experiences and interaction with others.”
- (2) Epistemologically, it holds reality that is “co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.”
- (3) Axiologically, which the author defines as referring to the role of values and a social constructive perspective includes “individual values that are honored and are negotiated among individuals” (Creswell, *ibid*: 36).

Considering these assumptions, the social constructive perspective within an interpretative paradigm holds best for the current research in terms of the nature of the collection, analysis, interpretation and understanding of the data. That is, in this study, reality is considered to be socially constructed and the aim is to look for meaning from the participants’ interpretations and perceptions. As an interpretative researcher, I was interested to grasp and interpret the participants’ perceptions as these developed over time. In doing this, I was aware of limitations of ‘perceptual data’ and the self-reporting nature of the comments from the participants, although it was interested in the participants’ perceptions, defined in the OED (online) as: ‘a particular attitude towards something; a point of view’. Whilst there can be challenges with self-reporting such as the validity and reliability of participants’ responses, it allows a valuable insight into ‘unique information’ (Green, Camilli and Elmore, 2006: 210) and allows the researcher a deeper insight into students’ opinions and perceptions (Appleton et al, 2006; Fredricks and McColskey, 2012).

To ensure the trustworthiness of research, crucial in interpretive research, Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested that researchers need to consider the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of their findings of research. In section 3.7, I explain in detail how I made every effort to ensure the trustworthiness of this current study. This included being critically reflexive about my interpretations and discussing my findings regularly with my critical friends, doctoral and post- doctoral colleagues, to reduce any chance of bias. Overall, I consider the qualitative approach and trust in the participants' voice timely, appropriate and entirely fit for purpose in that the approach enabled me to gain rich and detailed insights into the participants' views and perceptions that are central to this research.

In the following section, I outline the design of this current research.

3.3 Research Design

As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, the present research emerged from a realisation that EFL learners in Turkish public high schools are often unable to enhance their writing skills in English lessons for a number of reasons. According to Aydin & Başöz (2010), some of these are inadequate writing instruction, exam-oriented classrooms, grammar and/or reading-based textbooks and the teacher's attitudes towards EFL writing. I was also interested to research this topic because of the limited literature on investigating peer collaboration in EFL writing either in a classroom or online setting in both Turkey and the rest of the world. In order to address this problem, I decided to undertake an exploratory study in an online social networking site called Facebook (henceforth: FB) outside of school hours. I applied my study in an online setting instead of a classroom one, because it was not possible for me to gain access during the school day, hence I decided to conduct my research through a FB group. The study was designed as an online collaborative short story writing activity over a period of time with two groups of three EFL learners and as an exploratory study with an iterative research design. I turn now to the pilot study phase of the research.

3.3.1 Pilot Study

After obtaining ethical approval from King's College London's research ethics committee in late November 2012, I decided to undertake a pilot study between December 2012 and January 2013 to test the feasibility of the initial research design as well as with a view to improving the quality of the main study methodology (see Appendix II pilot study for upgrade document). A pilot study refers to "a small scale version or trial run, done in preparation for the major study" (Polit & Beck, 2006: 467). Conducting a pilot study prior to the major research study can give additional information to the researcher such that the latter can be improved (Wiersma, 1991). In brief, as described by Vogt (1993), a pilot study can be considered as a 'dress rehearsal' to identify any possible problems before undertaking the major study. Regarding the pilot study, my intention was to (1) determine the sample size for the main study, (2) to devise the main study's collaborative online short story writing activity, (3) to frame focus group discussions and (4) to firm up the research questions for the main study.

My colleague, who has been working as a teacher of English for 15 years in a high school, showed an interest in my study and agreed to be a "gatekeeper" (Creswell, 2013) to create an environment for me to present my project and invite volunteers from among her students. She reported that her students had been unable to improve their writing skills, because they only have English four hours per week and the curriculum requires teachers to teach mostly grammar and for the students to do grammar-related activities. Even though the students' course book includes writing activities, there is not enough time left for these activities to be undertaken in the classroom setting and therefore, they are given them as homework. However, as recounted by my colleague, most of students do not take writing homework seriously and teachers are aware that; generally, students enlist their parents, relatives or neighbours to do it for them.

Before the application of the pilot study, in early December 2012, I followed the official procedures. First, I obtained the required consent from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Izmir, Turkey. Then, I obtained the required consent from the principal of the school. The school is located in Izmir, the third largest city in Turkey with a population of approximately 3.7 million people.

On 12 December 2012, I went to my colleague's school and presented my project to a class of 34 students, which was selected by my colleague. After the presentation, 10 of them agreed to participate in the pilot study. I distributed information sheets and consent forms to them as well as their parents. I also explained to the students that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. In the next meeting with these 10 students, four of them decided to withdraw from the study and in the end, I started the pilot study with six students (Ayse, Fatma, Su, Mert, Burak and Cem), with their consent forms having been signed both by them and their parents. For ethical considerations, in this thesis these participants' real names are anonymised and pseudonyms have been used instead.

The six students, who were the participants in the pilot study, were 10th graders (16 years old, 3 females, 3 males) and their English level was considered as pre- intermediate level, according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), A2 level. However, not all the participants' English level was the same, as the English subject exam results provided by their English teacher for the autumn 2012 term and displayed in Table 3.1 demonstrate. These exams are assessed out of 100 and they mostly assess the students' grammar, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills, but with the exception of spelling, the skill of writing is not assessed. The final grading includes performance in the classroom and the responsibility for completing homework on time. The overall grade is assessed out of 5 and the above shows students' English grade in autumn 2012 term as printed on their report cards.

Table 3.1: Pilot study participants' autumn 2012 term exam results

Sex	Name	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3	Final Grade	Overall Grade
Female	Ayse	90	83	88	85	5
	Fatma	70	62	78	80	4
	Su	45	38	47	60	2
Male	Mert	94	96	98	100	5
	Burak	59	47	60	57	3
	Cem	33	48	70	60	3

In relation to the procedures of the pilot study, in the first week, I met the participants three times in the school during the breaks for focus group discussions. Between the

second and the fifth weeks, I implemented the pilot study. In the sixth, the final week, I held a focus group discussion with the participants and had a peer feedback session in the school during the breaks. Table 3.2 below provides an overview of the pilot study procedures.

Table 3.2: Overview of the pilot study procedures

Week	Dates	Procedures
1	12 Dec 12 – 17 Dec 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Presenting my project to a class of 34 students and inviting voluntary participants for the pilot study <input type="checkbox"/> Six participants agreed to participate in the pilot study <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 3
2	18 Dec 12 – 23 Dec 12	<u>Online Collaborative Short Story Writing Activity</u> <input type="checkbox"/> The six participants were asked to form two groups of three and then asked to attend their FB groups. <input type="checkbox"/> Each group was asked to produce a short story (minimum 300 to a maximum 600)
3	24 Dec 12-30 Dec 12	
4	31 Dec 12- 06 Jan 13	
5	07 Jan 13 -13 Jan 13	
6	15 Jan 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Peer feedback session

As seen in the table above, I conducted four focus group discussions with two groups of three participants during the pilot study. All discussions were audio recorded. The first three discussions were conducted before the writing activity and the fourth was undertaken after it. All discussions took place in the school's library. The aim of the first focus group discussion was to explore participants' views about of the skill of writing in English and their previous writing experiences in English. The aim of the second focus group discussion was to investigate their views about collaborative writing in English. The third focus group discussion was to probe participants' use of the Internet and social networking sites as well as eliciting their views about the idea of undertaking a writing activity in English in an FB group. The fourth focus group discussion was to investigate their interpretations about peer collaboration in the online short story writing activity, having completed it. Table 3.3 provides an overview of the focus group discussions employed during the pilot study.

Table 3.3: Overview of pilot study focus group discussions

Method	Topic(s) covered	How Long?	Where?	When?
Focus group discussion 1	Individual writing in English and writing activities implemented in English lessons	40 minutes	School's library	13 Dec 2012
Focus group discussion 2	Collaborative writing in English	40 minutes		14 Dec 2012
Focus group discussion 3	The idea of undertaking a collaborative writing activity in English in an FB group	45 minutes		17 Dec 2012
Focus group discussion 4	Peer collaboration in online short story writing	49 minutes		15 Jan 2013

In terms of the pilot study procedure, I first asked six participants to form two groups of three. In the first, there were three female participants (Ayse, Fatma and Su) and in the second, there were three males (Mert, Cem, and Burak). Following this, I asked the groups to join an FB group created for each of them and to decide upon a writing topic. Both groups decided to write a short story. Then, I asked them to produce a short story (minimum 300 to a maximum 600 words) in English by discussing only through the FB group in written form. I informed them that they were allowed to use their first language (Turkish) when discussing on FB the creation of the short story, which was to be written in English. Also, it was each group's responsibility to arrange the meeting dates and times. I attended all sessions of both groups as a facilitator. I chose not to involve myself in their discussions unless they asked me a question or sought help. The reason for this was because my research was aimed at gaining insights into the perceptions on the students engaging in peer collaboration during an online short story writing activity and if I intervened too much then the collaborative process would have impeded. By the end of the writing activity, both groups managed to produce their short stories over the four weeks. The first group held five sessions, whilst the second met four times.

A few days later on 15 January 2013, both groups completed and posted their short stories on their FB walls. I met them at the school for the peer feedback session as well as a focus group discussion. Concerning the peer feedback session, I printed out each group's writing and then I hung both scripts on the classroom wall, giving each participant 'Post-it notes' to evaluate the other group's work. After the peer evaluation, the groups read the story pertaining to them and then discussed what had been written with their evaluators. The peer feedback session lasted approximately 45 minutes and took place in the school's library. I also kept a research journal during the pilot study and based on my journal entries, I prepared the tables below (Table 3.4 and 3.5) from my research journal entries to illustrate the overview of each group's writing processes when producing their short stories.

Table 3.4: Timeline of the first group's (Ayse, Fatma and Su) writing

Timeline				
Week	Session	Date	Duration	Descriptions
1	Session 1	22 Dec 13	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group decided to write a short story about love and horror. Ayse began to lead the group and they brainstormed some ideas about their short story.
2	Session 2	29 Dec 13	45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayse asked Fatma and Su to draft their short story in Turkish.
3	Session 3	5 Jan13	25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayse divided the Turkish version of the short story into three parts and allocated them to each group member. Later, she asked each member to write the story according to the allocated
4	Session 4	12 Jan13	45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group member posted their part of the writing on the FB wall. Ayse combined all three parts and posted them as a whole. Then, Ayse asked Fatma and Su to identify and correct the grammar, vocabulary and spelling mistakes in the writing.
	Session 5	13 Jan 13	1 hour 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayse asked Fatma and Su to read the story once again to see if there were any inconsistencies regarding tenses and meaning. Ayse read it once again and made the necessary changes. Ayse published the final version of the short story on the FB wall.

Table 3.5: Timeline of the second group's (Mert, Burak and Cem) writing

Timeline				
Week	Session	Date	Duration	Descriptions
1	Session 1	23 Dec 13	50 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group started to discuss what type of short story to write.
2	Session 2	30 Dec 13	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group finalised their decision about their short story topic. Mert suggested they write about how three young guys became famous as a rock band. Burak and Cem agreed on Mert's suggestion.
3	Session 3	6 Jan 13	1 hour 40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mert posted the first couple of sentences of their short story and asked the other members to add to his writing. The group started to write the story in a cyclical way.
4	Session 4	13 Jan 13	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group completed writing the short story. Mert gave roles to each group member for editing the short story. <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burak checked the correctness of vocabulary and spelling. Cem checked if there were any grammar mistakes. Mert checked the coherence of the short story. Mert read the short story once again, made the necessary corrections and then published it on the FB wall.

In the following section, I describe the changes I made for the main study as a result of conducting the pilot study.

3.3.2 Amendments from the Pilot Study

As mentioned earlier, the main purpose of conducting the pilot study was to test the feasibility of the initial research design and improve the quality and efficiency of the main study methodology. I had four main aims. These were:

1. to determine sample size for the main study;
2. to devise the main study's collaborative online short story writing exercise;
3. to frame focus group discussions;
4. to firm up the research questions for the main study;

Regarding the first aim of the pilot study, I decided to undertake the main study with a sample of six participants. I found this sample size, two groups of three, had provided very useful insights and so decided to repeat the format. To select six participants appropriately for the main study, I prepared a checklist which I explain in the following section (main study). As regards the second aim of the pilot study, as I did not have a structured framework to draw for conducting a collaborative online short story writing activity in a Turkish public high school context, I had to trial my ideas for the design to assess their appropriateness for the writing exercise in the main study. As a result of the pilot study, I was able to devise the main study's writing exercise in the light of the feedback from focus group discussions with the participants and my research journal entries. I made three amendments for the main study's writing activity.

The first concerned giving some guidance to the main study participants in terms of selecting a short story topic in prewriting stage. As reported by some of the pilot study participants, they had difficulties in deciding on a particular topic for their short story as a group and they had spent nearly two sessions before all agreeing on what they wanted to write about. Moreover, from the pilot study I observed that until they understood what was required of them, they needed a lot of facilitator input, but subsequently this need diminished substantially. In the light of this, I decided to provide a short story topic for the main study participants as this would save time in them getting started.

The second amendment in relation to the writing exercise was the length of the collaborative online short story writing activity. As aforementioned, in the pilot study, the activity lasted four weeks. For the main study, in order to give participants more time to discuss and collaborate among one another, I decided to allocate seven weeks for the exercise. The third change was regarding the peer feedback session. As I mentioned earlier, this session took place in a face-to-face setting. However, I have seen that this caused some disruption to students' lessons so, I decided this could be conducted in a new FB group that would include all six participants. To summarise, I decided that the main study's writing activity would be undertaken over seven weeks with two groups of three participants in a FB group including peer feedback session at the end.

Returning to the aims of the pilot study, the third was about holding focus group discussions before the main study, helped me considerably in terms of learning how to evaluate participants' opinions and suggestions about the set writing activity. Thus, by the end of the pilot study, I felt much more confident about conducting focus group discussions and consequently, was of the opinion that I would be more skilled at running them during the main study. I observed that some of the pilot study participants could not or did not want to express their opinions or feelings openly in front their friends. In fact, some of them chose to do so by sending private messages or chat requests through FB. Taking this into account, I decided to employ online one- to-one chats as well as focus group discussions for the main study. On top of this, having considered that depending on participants' narratives, these may not be sufficient, I therefore planned to use the participants' online discussion boards in their FB groups for the main study to further ensure the credibility of data. To summarise, the key data collection tools in the main study would be focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats and online discussion boards.

The fourth aim of the pilot study was about firming up the research questions for the main study. Without specific and clear research questions, a study may be unfocused and the researcher is likely to be unsure about what it is about and what it is for (Bryman, 2008). As explained earlier, the general purpose of this study was to investigate EFL Turkish high school students' perceptions on peer collaboration within a context of how to support them to improve their writing development through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise. I conducted the pilot study to identify clear research questions for guiding the main investigation appropriately and this led to the following:

1. How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
2. What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

In the following subsection, I describe the main study phase of this research.

3.3.3 Main Study

I conducted the main study from 29 March 2014 until 2 June 2014 including the data collection. In late March 2014, I contacted a colleague of mine working as an English teacher in a high school in Izmir. I explained my project to her and requested her to act as a “gatekeeper” (Creswell, 2013) and to find six participants for my study. I had a Skype meeting with her, during which I explained my research and why I wanted to conduct this research with her students. My colleague agreed to help me to find participants, although she was concerned about her students’ writing competences in English. As reported by my colleague, within one academic year, she does very few writing exercises with her students and she prefers not to give writing exercises, because she believes they should improve their speaking skills prior to their writing skills. In the end, I convinced my colleague that my research had some potential to help her students’ writing skills. She wanted to approach six students in her class of 28 students. I requested her to take the following checklist of criteria (see Table 3.6) that I had prepared during the pilot study into account.

Table 3.6: Checklist to select participants for the main study

	Criteria	Tick	Cross
1	Prospective participants should attend the study for 10 weeks voluntarily and have the right to withdraw from it any time until October 2014.		
2	They should have a Facebook account and volunteer to attend the study at least one session in a week over seven weeks.		
3	They should have a laptop or smartphone which can access the Internet at home or outside.		
4	They agree to attend four informal discussions about the research during break times at school.		

A few days later, my colleague contacted me explaining that six students in her classroom had shown an interest in participating in my study. Before I met them, she asked me to obtain official consent from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Izmir and the school’s principal. Once I had obtained both of these, I met the students whom my colleague found for me at school during a lunch break. I explained my research project, where I was studying and gave them information and consent sheets for them as well as for their parents. I also asked a few questions of each participant to get to know them. These questions were related to the research such as

question regarding their English learning backgrounds, if they owned a laptop, desktop computer or smartphone and could access the Internet. I also welcomed questions from the prospective participants.

A few days later, I met these six students in school during another lunch break and they agreed to participate in my study, voluntarily and I also received their consent forms signed both by them and their parents. In the meeting, I asked these students, who became the participants of my main study, to form two groups of three and attend an FB group created for each group. During these meetings, I became convinced that, as in the pilot study, the students' ages, 16 years old, and their language level, would enable them to engage in the writing activity on a social and linguistic level and that they had the confidence to be able to discuss and share their views and perceptions.

The first group of participants were three females, Nila, Gonca and Deniz and the second comprised two males, Ali and Atilla and one female, Selma. For ethical considerations, in this thesis, these participants' real names are anonymised and pseudonyms have been used instead. All six participants were at the 10th grade and 16 years old. To draw a distinction between two groups of main study participants, henceforth, I call the first group (Nila, Gonca and Deniz) group A, while the second (Ali, Atilla and Selma) is named group B.

I started the collaborative online short story writing activity on 18 April 2014 with both groups and ended on 30 May 2014. Table 3.7 below shows the overview of the main study procedures.

Table 3.7: Overview of the main study procedures

Week	Date	Procedures
1	29 March 2014	I contacted a colleague of mine working as an English teacher in a high school in Izmir and requested her to become a gatekeeper for my study.
2	3 April 2014	My colleague explained my project to her class of 28 students and six students volunteered to participate.
	9 April 2014	I obtained the required consent from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Izmir.

3	10 April 2014	I met my colleague and the school's principal. I obtained consent from the school to conduct my research with the students.
	11 April 2014	I met the six students who wanted to volunteer to participate in my study at the school. I had a short meeting with them during the lunch break. I distributed information and consent letters both for them and their parents.
4	16 April 2014	I met the six students at school during the lunch break and all agreed to participate in my study. I received their consent forms signed both by them and their parents.
	18 April 2014	Both groups had their 'session 1'.
5	25 April 2014	Both groups had their 'session 2'.
6	2 May 2014	Both groups had their 'session 3'.
7	9 May 2014	Both groups had their 'session 4'.
8	15 May 2014	Both groups had their 'session 5'.
	16 May 2014	Both groups had their 'session 6'.
9	22 May 2014	I had 'focus group discussion 2' with the six participants.
	23 May 2014	Both groups had their 'session 7'.
10	26 May 2014	Both groups had their 'session 8'.
	28 May 2014	Both groups had their 'session 9'.
	29 May 2014	I had 'focus group discussion 3' with the six participants.
	30 May 2014	Both groups submitted their short stories and a peer feedback 'session 10' was held.
	2 June 2014	I had 'focus group discussion 4' with the six participants.

As seen in Table 3.7 above, for data collection tools, I had four focus group discussions with the participants and I also collected participants' online discussion threads on FB over the period of completing the task. In addition, I had online one-to-one chats with most of the participants and my journal entries as data for analysis. In the next section (3.4), I introduce each main study participant.

I was involved in the writing activity as a facilitator and I attended all ten sessions on FB for both groups. Before the writing activity began, participants discussed in groups

and collectively decided when to meet. After a fifteen minute discussion, both groups agreed to meet with their members every Friday to produce their short stories in their FB groups. In the first session, I held a discussion about short story writing with each group and in the second, I initiated the writing activity with a short story topic and six picture frames (see Appendix III) to help the participants organise their ideas given that they had had little opportunity to write freely. Apart from this, as with the pilot study, I preferred not to be involved in either group's discussions unless participants sought help from me as I wanted to have minimum impact on the collaborative process.

In the tables (Tables 3.8 and 3.9) below can be seen each group's writing processes over seven weeks, which I prepared from my research journal entries.

Table 3.8: Timeline of the group A's (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) writing

Timeline				
Week	Session	Date	Duration	Descriptions
1	Session 1	18 Apr 14	40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group and I discussed about short story writing
2	Session 2	25 Apr 14	1 hour 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I guided the participants with six picture frames (see Appendix III) to start their short story. This group had problems starting a discussion. Nila was elected as the group leader.
3	Session 3	2 May 14	1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nila asked Gonca to write the personal characteristics and Deniz the physical characteristics of the main character of the story. Nila described the basic details of the main character (e.g. age, job, where the main character of the story lived and worked).
4	Session 4	9 May 14	1 hour 50 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nila divided the six picture frames into three pairs and each member started to describe the pictures.
5	Session 5	15 May 14	50 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nila opened the floor for discussion about what to add on their short story. Nila and Gonca made suggestions. Nila considered their suggestions and gave individual writing tasks to each of them including herself.
	Session 6	16 May 14	40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group continued with adding on their story under the leadership of Nila without seeking any guidance from the facilitator.

6	Session 7	23 May 14	1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group ended their short story under the leadership of Nila and sought little guidance from the facilitator.
7	Session 8	26 May 14	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants edited their whole story together.
	Session 9	28 May 14	45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants further edited their whole story and collectively decided upon its title.
	Session10	30 May 14	1 hour 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another discussion board was created for both groups. Each group posted the final version of their short story there and gave peer-feedback about the other group's creation.

Table 3.9: Timeline of the group B's (Ali, Atilla & Selma) writing

Timeline				
Week	Session	Date	Duration	Descriptions
1	Session 1	18 Apr 14	50 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group and I discussed about short story writing.
2	Session 2	25 Apr 14	1 hour 45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I guided the participants with the six picture frames (see Appendix III) to start their short story. This group had problems starting a discussion. Selma was elected as a group leader.
3	Session 3	2 May 14	50 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selma divided the picture frames them and Selma, Ali & Atilla started to describe them individually.
4	Session 4	9 May 14	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selma started to give the other members (Ali & Atilla) individual writing tasks to perform for the story writing.
5	Session 5	15 May 14	1 hour 05 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group continued with adding to their story under the leadership of Selma without seeking any guidance from the facilitator.
	Session 6	16 May 14	1 hour 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group ended their short story under the leadership of Selma

				without seeking any guidance from the facilitator.
6	Session 7	23 May 14	43 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selma combined the whole story and asked Ali and Attila to help her.
7	Session 8	26 May 14	34 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants edited their drafts together.
	Session 9	28 May 14	50 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants edited their story and collectively decided upon a title.
	Session10	30 May 14	1 hour 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another discussion board was created for both groups. Each group posted the final version of their short story there and gave peer-feedback to other group's short story.

In the following section, I provide some background information for each main study participant.

3.4 Main Study Participants

As I explained earlier, I asked the six participants to form two groups of three and then asked them to attend the FB group created for each group before the collaborative online short story writing activity. Group A's participants were three females: Nila, Gonca and Deniz and group B's were two males: Ali, Atilla and one female: Selma, all pseudonyms as previously mentioned. All six participants were at 10th grade and 16 years old. In what follows, I briefly introduce my six main study participants and provide some information on the following topics:

- Participants' English learning history
- Participants' engagement with English outside school hours
- Participants' views on writing in English
- Participants' views on writing exercises in English
- Participants' views on collaborative writing, in general, and CW in English, in particular
- Participants' use of social networking sites
- Participants' relationships with the study's group partners before and after the study

- Participants' use of technology to log into FB during the study (e.g. desktop computer, laptop, smartphone)

Information about participants on the above-mentioned topics was gathered from my research journal entries. I had a number of informal talks with each participant during breaks at school during the study.

After each conversation, I noted down what had been covered and how the participant had responded. First, I introduce group A's participants (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) followed by group B's (Ali, Attila & Selma).

Group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz)

Nila: Nila reported that she had been learning English since primary school 4th grade (nearly seven years). She said she had been taking private tuition in English for the last two years and she explained that she enjoyed learning English. Outside of school hours, she listened to songs in English and chatted (in a written form) in English with her Italian and Greek friends she had met on FB. Nila said she found writing in English not very hard if it took place in an informal setting, such as chatting with her non- Turkish friends in a setting of social networking. However, when it came to English lessons, she felt that it was not very easy to write in the language, because her teacher expected her to write using the correct grammar, vocabulary and spelling. According to Nila, her teacher of English did not always ask them to do writing exercises in English lessons. She reported that her teacher of English usually gave writing exercises as assignments, such as writing a short story, describing their dream holiday or writing a letter / e-mail to a friend. She explained that she liked writing exercises in English, such as describing a dream holiday or a favourite celebrity and writing fairy tales. Nila said she had no experience of collaborative writing either in Turkish or in English before engaging in the writing exercise, but she had found it interesting to work in this way. She explained that she had been using Facebook, and Instagram as social networking sites and that now she believed that foreign language learning could be promoted through such media.

As reported by Nila, Gonca and Deniz were her best friends in the school. She said they always hung out together during breaks at school and also met outside school. Nila

stated that she had a fun time with her two friends during the writing exercise. She said that she mostly had used her laptop to undertake the writing activity in FB during the study, but she added that she had also used her smartphone from time to time.

Gonca: Gonca reported that she had been learning English since Kindergarten (nearly 10 years). She said she had attended a language school to support her English learning for two years during middle school. At the time of the data collection, she commented that she was busy with her other school subjects and therefore, did not spend much time on improving her English. Gonca said that outside school hours, she listened to songs in English and watched movies in English with Turkish subtitles. Gonca reported that she had some grammar problems in English and consequently, made plenty of mistakes when writing in the language. Gonca said she preferred speaking to writing in English, because she believed that she was not alone when speaking to somebody. However, in writing, she felt that she was alone and could not guess if the reader would really understand her and this feeling put her off doing so. Gonca thought that foreign language learning should be taught in a fun way so when it came to writing exercises, entertaining ones, such as describing her ideal boyfriend / girlfriend and her favourite celebrity should be given to students. She said that she had not undertaken any collaborative writing exercises before either in Turkish or in English and the only thing she knew about it was through Wikipedia. Regarding collaborative writing in English, Gonca thought it could help students who had difficulties. She was using Facebook and Instagram as social networking sites and as Deniz and Nila were her best friends she felt comfortable using FB to work with them during the writing exercise. As there was only one desktop computer at Gonca's house, she said she had mostly used her smartphone to undertake the writing activity and had only used the computer twice.

Deniz: Deniz explained that she had been learning English since primary school 4th grade (nearly 7 years) and even though she liked the language she found it hard to learn it. Deniz said she had only studied English before the exams since the 4th grade. As reported by her, outside of school hours she listened to songs in English. She thought writing was one of the most difficult skills in English and said she felt anxious when she was asked to do so in exams. She preferred to answer grammar or reading questions to writing a composition in English. Deniz explained the reason why she felt anxious was

that she felt she did not have enough grammar and vocabulary knowledge to make sentences in English. She said that a writing exercise in English needed to be motivating to learners, for example, writing an e-mail to a friend, writing a poem / short story, writing a diary or a biography. Deniz noted she had not undertaken collaborative writing either in Turkish or English before. She attended this study because she thought working with her best friends [Gonca and Nila] would help her learn something about how to write in English better. Gonca only used Facebook as a social networking site. Deniz stated that Gonca and Nila were her best friends and she felt she even got closer to them during the study, for it had strengthened the ties of their friendship. Deniz said that as there was one desktop computer at her house and she had two older brothers who were using it all the time, so she had undertaken the study through her smartphone only. I summarise group A participants' profiles in Table 3.10 below.

Table 3.10: Summary of group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) participant's profiles

Group A			
Topics	Nila	Gonca	Deniz
English learning history	Nearly 7 years; private tuition for the last three years	Nearly 10 years; English language school for two years in the middle school	Nearly 7 years, only studies English before the exams since 4 th grade
Engagement with English outside school hours	Listening to songs in English and chatting with Italian and Greek friends in a written way in the setting of FB	Listening to songs in English and watching movies in English with Turkish subtitles	Listening to songs in English
Views on writing in English	Writing in English informally is not very hard, but when it comes to English lessons, it is not very easy	Does not like writing in English because of some grammar issues and fear of making too many of mistakes	Writing in English is very hard and it causes apprehension. The reason for this is lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge
Views on writing exercises in English	Likes writing exercises in English such as describing a dream holiday or a favourite celebrity or writing a fairy tale	Writing exercises in English should be entertaining such as describing an ideal boyfriend / girlfriend and a favourite celebrity	Writing exercises in English should be motivating, such as writing an e-mail to a friend, writing a poem / short story, writing a diary or biography.

Views on collaborative writing in general and doing so in English, specifically	No idea or previous experience either in Turkish or in English	No previous experience either in Turkish or in English; only knows of it from Wikipedia	No previous experience either in Turkish or in English; attended this study with the thought that her friends would help teach her how to write in English better
Use of online social networking sites	Facebook, and Instagram	Facebook, and Instagram	Facebook
Relationships with group partners before and after the study	Best friends with Gonca and Deniz, had a fun time with them during the writing exercise	Best friends with Nila and Deniz; felt comfortable working with them during the writing exercise.	Best friends with Nila and Gonca; the writing exercise strengthened the ties of their friendship
Use of technology to log into FB during the study	Mostly laptop, sometimes smartphone	Mostly smartphone, twice desktop computer	Only smartphone

Group B (Ali, Attila & Selma)

Ali: Ali reported that he had been learning English since primary school 4th grade (nearly 7 years). He said he had not attended a language school or taken any private tuition to support his English before. Outside school hours, he usually played online games, which required him to use his English writing to communicate with the other player(s). Ali explained that he mostly used Google Translate when he needed to write in English, especially in writing assignments and consequently, did not find writing in English very hard. Ali believed that his English was not very good because he did not spend much time learning it and he added that he did not have the opportunity to practise his English in real-life contexts. According to him, writing exercises in English lessons should both entertain and enable him to put his existing grammar and vocabulary knowledge in English into practice. Ali noted that writing exercises were usually given as homework assignments during English lessons and he either did them through Google Translate or asked his older sister to help. He stated that he had not undertaken any collaborative writing exercises either in Turkish or in English before and said that he only knew about Wikipedia for collaborative writing. He believed that such writing in

English would help him to learn how to write better in English from his group partners. Ali said he had used Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat as online social networking sites. He explained that Attila was his best friend in the class. Ali said he had known Attila for a very long time and they used to play outdoors in the same neighbourhood when they were as young as seven years old. However, He reported that he only knew Selma as a classmate, but he added that he had built a stronger friendship tie with her during the writing exercise. Ali explained that he had used mostly his smartphone, but sometimes his laptop, to undertake the writing exercise during the study.

Attila: Attila reported that he had been learning English since primary school 4th grade (nearly 7 years). He explained that he had been attending language school to consolidate his English learning for the last three years. He said that outside school hours, he listened to songs in English and watched movies in English with Turkish subtitles. Attila also added that he used a mobile application which had grammar exercises in English and felt he could enhance his grammar knowledge through it. Attila believed that writing in English is better than speaking in English. However, to produce sentences in writing took longer and sometimes became boring. He thought that more writing exercises should be undertaken in English lessons and that they should be guided more by their teacher of English. Attila said he preferred writing exercises in English helped motivate him to engage, such as sending a postcard to a friend, describing a picture or writing a short story. He had never undertaken a writing exercise either in Turkish or English before. Attila identified the adventurousness of doing collaborative writing it could take away the loneliness in the production process of writing as they could always ask each other questions when producing a sentence in English. Attila suggested that if you had to undertake such a writing exercise people you did not like, then it would become a nightmare. He said he was using Facebook and Instagram as online social networking sites. Attila explained that he had known Ali for a very long time and they were very good friends. He explained he knew Selma as a classmate, but he added that during the study, they had become good friends. Attila had mostly used his smartphone when undertaking the writing exercise during the study but from time to time he said he had used his laptop.

Selma: Selma explained that she had been learning English since primary school 4th grade (nearly 7 years). She reported that she had been taking private English tuitions for the last two years and she said she went to a language summer school in the UK for a month in 2012. Selma said she was confident with her English knowledge. Outside school hours, she explained that she read graded books in English, listened to songs in English and watched the BBC to practise her listening skills. She said even though she took a longer time to produce sentences when writing in English, she liked the skill of writing more than that of speaking. As suggested by Selma, writing exercises in English lessons should help students' practise their grammar or vocabulary knowledge. For example, students could be asked to write a short story in the simple past tense or they could be taught a couple of words in English and then be asked to make sentences with them. Selma stated that she did not have any prior ideas about or experience of collaborative writing either in English or Turkish. She said that she personally preferred individual writing to collaborative writing, because she wanted to have control. Selma said she mostly used Facebook for online social networking. She knew Ali and Attila only as her classmates, but she reported that she had built closer friendship ties with them both during the writing exercise. Selma said she only used her laptop to when undertaking the writing exercise in FB. I summarise group B participants' profiles in Table 3.11 below.

Table 3.11: Summary of group B (Ali, Attila & Selma) participants' profile

Group B			
Topics	Ali	Attila	Selma
English Learning History	Nearly 7 years, no English support apart from English lessons	Nearly 7 years; language school for the last three years	Nearly 7 years; English private tuition for the last two years; language summer school in the UK for a month in 2012

Engagement with English outside the school hours	Playing online games in English and communicating with the other players in English	Listening to songs in English; watching movies in English with Turkish subtitles; and mobile application to practise his English grammar knowledge	Reading graded books in English; listening to songs in English; and watching BBC channel to practise her listening skills in English
Views on writing in English	Not finding it very hard because he mostly uses Google Translate	Writing is better than speaking but producing sentences in English can be boring	Even though it takes more time when writing in English, she likes this skill
Views on writing exercises in English	Writing exercises in English should both entertain and enable him to put his grammar and vocabulary knowledge into practice	More writing exercises should be implemented in English lessons with the guidance of their teacher of English	Writing exercises which could help students to practise their grammar and vocabulary knowledge in English should be implemented
Views on collaborative writing in general and doing so in English, specifically	No previous experience either in Turkish or in English; only knows Wikipedia. Ali participated in this study with an expectation that his group partners would help him learn how to write in English better	No previous experience either in Turkish or in English. Collaborative writing in English could be helpful for students so long as those involved like each other	No previous experience neither in Turkish nor in English, only knows Wikipedia. Prefers individual writing to collaborative writing
Use of online social networking sites	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat	Facebook and Instagram	Facebook
Relationships with group partners before and after the study	Ali and Attila have been best friends since seven years old. He became a good friend of Selma during the writing exercise	Attila and Ali are best friends. He became a good friend of Selma during the writing exercise	Only knew them as classmates before the study, but during the study, she built closer friendship ties with both Ali & Attila

Use of technology to log into FB during the study	Mostly smartphone; sometimes laptop	Mostly smartphone; sometimes laptop	Only laptop
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It can be seen that the self-assessed levels of the participants were varied. In fact, these six participants' English level was considered to be intermediate, according to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), A2 level. However, they were not all at the same level, as the English subject exam results provided by their English teacher for the autumn 2013 term and displayed in Table 3.12 below show.

As mentioned in pilot study section, exams are assessed out of 100 and they mostly assess students' grammar, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills, for with the exception of spelling, the skill of writing is not assessed. The final grading includes students' performance in the classroom and the responsibility for completing homework on time. The overall grade is assessed out of 5 and Table 3.12 below shows students' English grade in autumn 2013 term as printed on their report cards.

Table 3.12: Main Study participants' autumn 2013 term exam results

Group	Sex	Name	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3	Final Grade	Overall Grade
Group 1	Female	Deniz	55	64	40	70	3
		Gonca	95	87	83	85	5
		Nila	79	82	72	85	4
Group 2	Male	Ali	39	45	40	60	2
		Atilla	70	64	76	80	4
	Female	Selma	100	98	95	100	5

Having introduced the participants in order to see their language learning views, experiences and motivations, in the following section, I explain the main study methods.

3.5 Main Study Methods

A qualitative research is traditionally associated with specific methods, for example, in this study, focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats, and online discussion boards were employed. I also kept a research journal to keep track of my research. According to Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998), it is appropriate to combine two or more research methods in order to gain deeper understanding of social and human problems. Therefore, in this study, I utilised three methods and a research journal to understand the topic under scrutiny in depth and from different angles. In order to obtain robust responses to my research questions and ensure the credibility of my research findings. I employed the following methods (see Table 3.13) for each research question.

Table 3.13: Main Study methods used for each research question

Main Study Methods Design		
Methods		Research Questions
Focus Group Discussions	Online Discussion Boards	1. How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
Focus Group Discussions	Online one-to-one chats	2. What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

In the following section, I outline respectively these three methods, namely: focus group discussions, online discussion boards, and online one-to-one chats. I also explain the research journal, which helped me provide additional contextual information on the participants' English learning backgrounds and the instructional context.

3.5.1 Focus Group Discussions

A focus group involves an informal discussion or a series of informal discussions among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic (Wilkinson, 2004). According to Liamputtong (2009), the primary aim of focus group discussions is to describe and interpret meanings of a selected group of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from their standpoint.

Morgan (1998) was of the view that methodologically, focus group discussions involve ideally a group of 6-8 people who come from similar social and cultural backgrounds or who have similar experiences or concerns. The author added that participants in focus group discussions gather together to discuss a specific issue with the help of a moderator in a particular setting where they feel comfortable enough to engage in a dynamic discussion for one or two hours. Hennink (2007) argued that focus group discussions do not aim to reach consensus on the discussed issue. Rather, these discussions encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behaviour, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issue.

Focus group discussions seemed to me to be ideal in order to aims to address both research questions of this thesis. I conducted four focus group discussions with the six participants in the school's library with different dates during the main study. All these discussions were undertaken in Turkish and audio-recorded for later transcription. My role in the discussions was a facilitator rather than a moderator, for I did not want to lead or monitor the dialogue. I provided them more opportunities to lead the discussion than during the pilot study and only intervened when they went off message. Table 3.14 below illustrates the procedures and aims of the focus group discussions conducted during the main study.

Table 3.14: Overview of main study focus group discussions

focus group discussions	Date	Duration	Procedures
Focus group discussion 1	8 May 2014	1 hour 20 minutes	Based on the participants' experiences in sessions, 2 & 3, this discussion was aimed at exploring participants' interpretations of peer collaboration and perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the online collaborative short story writing activity.
Focus group discussion 2	22 May 2014	1 hour 10 minutes	Based on the participants' experiences in sessions 4 & 5, this discussion was aimed at exploring the same issues as above in their online collaborative short story writing activity.

Focus group discussion 3	29 May 2014	1 hour 30 minutes	Based on the participants' experiences in sessions 6, 7 & 8, the aim of this discussion was to probe participants' interpretations of peer collaboration and perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during their collaboration.
Focus group discussion 4	2 June 2014	50 minutes	Based on the participants' experiences in sessions 9 & 10, the aim of this discussion was to investigate participants' interpretations of peer collaboration and their perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration at this final stage.

To explain the procedures of the discussions, all six participants attended all four focus group discussions. As I did not want to sound formal to the participants, I referred to this data collection tool as focus group discussions instead of interviews. As I mentioned earlier, all discussions took place in the school's library. We sat around a round table and I provided the participants with fruit juice and some pastries in all four focus group discussions to create an informal environment for discussions.

The first focus group discussion was concerned with participants' experiences during sessions 2 & 3 whilst engaging in collaborative short story writing in English in their FB groups. I did not include session 1 in the first focus group discussion, because as explained in subsection 3.3.3, no collaborative activity took place during that particular session. For the first focus group discussion, I set two topics. The first was to understand and interpret what peer collaboration was considered to be in online short story writing and the second was to probe how peer collaboration in this type of writing helps or hinders participants' writing development in English. As it was the first such meeting, I did not want to tell participants what we were going to discuss at the beginning of the session. I initiated the discussion with topics that were not related to the writing. The idea behind this was to create a comfortable atmosphere prior to introducing them to the collaborative work and once they seemed to feel at ease I started to question them about the two above mentioned topics. After we had covered them, I distributed to all six participants in both groups hard copy of online discussions that took place between sessions 2 & 3. I allowed some time for them to read and underline the parts they found interesting. Once they were ready, I asked them to give some examples from their

online discussions regarding what peer collaboration means during a short story writing activity in an FB group and whether they considered such collaboration helped or hindered their writing development in English.

The second discussion pertained to the participants' experiences in sessions 4 & 5. They were visibly more comfortable during this session. I wrote two questions on the board which were the same topics covered in the first focus group discussion. My two main discussion questions were:

1 What do you mean when you talk of peer collaboration in this short story writing?

2 How does this peer collaboration in this writing help or hinder your writing in English?

After we had discussed these two questions, I distributed hard copy of all six participants' online discussions for session 4 & 5. The third and the fourth discussions were conducted in the same way as the second. I observed in the first and second focus group discussions that regarding their online exchanges, most of them had been referring to what peer collaboration was rather than how it could help or hinder their writing development in English when working online. This content on the nature of peer collaboration was thus included in the data collection as it could be used for triangulation purposes in terms of comparison with the participants' contributions during the focus group discussions. For the second research question, I decided to use the one-to-one chat data as a means of data triangulation. The following subsection gives some details about the online discussion boards.

3.5.2 Online Discussion Boards

Online discussion boards were chosen for this study to triangulate the first research question which was "How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?" Online discussion boards in this study took place in FB groups. Six participants formed two groups of three and joined their FB groups created by me, the researcher. Each group discussed in Turkish in written form synchronously to produce the piece of short story in English in their FB groups. In the first of the ten sessions, I, as facilitator had a discussion about the short story and did not include the first session of online discussion threads in the data analysis, because I did not detect any peer collaboration interactions from the first threads. From the second to the ninth session,

each group worked to produce their story in the FB group. The tenth and final session was about peer feedback among both groups. Tables 3.15 and 3.16 below provides an overview of each group's sessions from session 2-9 with dates and duration and also illustrate the number of online discussion threads that were collected. Table 3.1 illustrates both groups' joint peer feedback session (session 10), with the dates, duration and the number of online discussion threads that were collected.

Table 3.15: Overview of the online discussion boards for group A (Deniz, Gonca & Nila)

Week	Session	Date	Duration	Number of discussion threads
2	Session 2	25 Apr14	1 hour 20 minutes	120 threads
3	Session 3	2 May 14	1 hour	80 threads
4	Session 4	9 May 14	1 hour 50 minutes	185 threads
5	Session 5	15 May 14	50 minutes	103 threads
	Session 6	16 May 14	40 minutes	77 threads
6	Session 7	23 May 14	1 hour	138 threads
7	Session 8	26 May 14	30 minutes	65 threads

	Session 9	28 May 14	45 minutes	94 threads
Total number of threads				862 threads

Table 3.16: Overview of the online discussion boards for group B (Ali, Attila & Selma)

Week	Session	Date	Duration	Number of discussion threads
2	Session 2	25 Apr14	1 hour 45 minutes	180 threads
3	Session 3	2 May 14	1 hour	94 threads
4	Session 4	9 May 14	2 hours	220 threads
5	Session 5	15 May 14	1 hour 5 minutes	118 threads
	Session 6	16 May 14	1 hour 30 minutes	140 threads
6	Session 7	23 May 14	43 minutes	50 threads
7	Session 8	26 May 14	34 minutes	66 threads
	Session 9	28 May 14	50 minutes	93 threads
Total number of threads				961 threads

Table 3.17: Overview of the online discussion boards for group A and B's peer feedback session (session 10)

Week	Session	Date	Duration	Number of discussion threads collected
7	10	30 May 14	1 hour 30 minutes	246 threads

In the following subsections, I first describe online one-to-one chats.

3.5.3 Online One-to-One Chats

Online one-to-one chats were chosen for this study to triangulate the second research question, which was “What are EFL learners’ perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?”. As I discussed in subsection 3.3.2, I decided to employ online one-to-one chats because I observed that some of the pilot study participants could not or did not want to express their opinions or feelings openly in front their friends. In fact, as also mentioned previously, some of them chose to do so by sending private messages or chat requests through FB. In the case of the main study, I used this method to receive participants’ individual views on whether and if so, how, collaboration among peers in an online short story writing activity helped or hindered their writing development in English. As I explained in the previous subsection, I had not received much data about the second research question from the participants’ online discussions. To address this, I decided to conduct informal one-to-one chats through FB chat to triangulate the focus group discussions. I conducted the one-to-one chats after the all the sessions, except the first as no evidence of collaboration arose from it, for both groups which was either on the same day or the next day through FB. They lasted between 10 and 20 minutes and were about their perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity. Tables 3.18 and 3.19 below provide an overview of the online one-to-one chats gathered from the participants.

Table 3.18: Overview of one-to-one chats for group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz)

Name of the Participant	After session	Date	Duration	Number of online one-to-one chat threads
	2	26 April 14	15 minutes	57 threads
	3	3 May 14	7 minutes	37 threads
	4	9 May 14	18 minutes	65 threads

Nila	5	15 May 14	13 minutes	49 threads
	6	16 May 14	9 minutes	38 threads
	7	24 May 14	17 minutes	60 threads
	8	26 May 14	8 minutes	14 threads
	9	28 May 14	15 minutes	43 threads
	10	31 May 14	14 minutes	32 threads
Gonca	2	25 April 14	20 minutes	74 threads
	3	2 May 14	14 minutes	30 threads
	4	10 May 14	15 minutes	44 threads
	5	15 May 14	19 minutes	68 threads
	6	16 May 14	10 minutes	24 threads
	7	24 May 14	16 minutes	58 threads
	8	26 May 14	19 minutes	67 threads
	9	28 May 14	15 minutes	53 threads
	10	31 May 14	18 minutes	68 threads
Deniz	2	26 April 14	16 minutes	61 threads
	3	3 May 14	14 minutes	53 threads
	4	10 May 14	11 minutes	48 threads
	5	15 May 14	25 minutes	87 threads
	6	16 May 14	7 minutes	35 threads
	7	23 May 14	8 minutes	14 threads
	8	26 May 14	19 minutes	64 threads
	9	28 May 14	7 minutes	10 threads
	10	30 May 14	14 minutes	30 threads

Table 3.19: Overview of one-to-one chats for group B (Ali, Attila & Selma)

Name of the Participant	After session	Date	Duration	Number of discussion threads collected
Ali	2	25 April 14	16 minutes	57 threads
	3	3 May 14	12 minutes	45 threads
	4	10 May 14	14 minutes	53 threads
	5	15 May 14	10 minutes	40 threads
	6	16 May 14	14 minutes	49 threads
	7	24 May 14	11 minutes	43 threads
	8	26 May 14	8 minutes	32 threads
	9	28 May 14	12 minutes	44 threads
	10	31 May 14	15 minutes	58 threads
Attila	2	25 April 14	21 minutes	79 threads
	3	3 May 14	15 minutes	56 threads
	4	10 May 14	18 minutes	62 threads
	5	15 May 14	20 minutes	77 threads
	6	16 May 14	10 minutes	24 threads
	7	24 May 14	12 minutes	45 threads
	8	27 May 14	17 minutes	66 threads
	9	29 May 14	16 minutes	60 threads
	10	30 May 14	10 minutes	17 threads
	2	25 April 14	10 minutes	18 threads
	3	3 May 14	8 minutes	11 threads
	4	10 May 14	12 minutes	34 threads

Selma	5	15 May 14	11 minutes	14 threads
	6	16 May 14	15 minutes	25 threads
	7	24 May 14	12 minutes	40 threads
	8	26 May 14	9 minutes	14 threads
	9	29 May 14	16 minutes	55 threads
	10	31 May 14	15 minutes	55 threads

There is a discussion of how I analysed these threads in 3.6.2.

3.5.4 Research Journal

I employed a research journal to provide a running commentary for myself about the research and to gather some contextual information. Before the study, I gathered some information from the school such as the school's history, environment and facilities. I later asked my colleague (the participants' English teacher) questions about her views on the implementation of the skill of writing in English lessons and writing assignments and noted down this information in this journal. Throughout the study, I also gathered information from each participant on the following topics, as discussed previously section 3.4.

- Participants' English learning history
- Participants' engagement with English outside the school hours
- Participants' views on writing in English
- Participants' views on writing exercises in English
- Participants' views on collaborative writing in general and CW in English in particular
- Participants' use of social networking sites
- Participants' relationships with the study's group partners before and after the study
- Participants' use of technology to log into FB during the study (e.g. desktop computer, laptop, smartphone)

During the writing activity, I went to school four times in a week to both familiarise myself with the participants and get some information about how they interacted with

their group members during the lessons and breaks. I also noted down how each group produced their short stories in English in their FB groups from sessions 1 to 10. After the writing activity, I also took notes about how I collected, reflected upon and analysed the data, thereby charting the development of this research (Bolton, 2001). In the following section, I explain the data analysis for the current research.

3.6 Data Analysis

Maykut & Morehouse (1994:121) highlighted that qualitative analysis is a “... non mathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people’s words and actions.” Qualitative data sets are mostly in prose in the form of field notes, interview transcripts and documents (Bryman, 2008). For the current study, as described in the previous section, I have employed various methods and gathered different types of qualitative data sets, including focus group discussion transcripts, online discussion threads and one-to-one online chat threads as well as field notes and critical reflections on the research. The data were analysed using the open coding analytical approach, scrutinizing the data sets, and highlighting emerging codes with highlighters then reorganizing under thematic headings as described below. The reason for employing open coding was because no such study has been conducted in a Turkish public high school context previously. That is, as there was no particular framework to start from, open coding enabled me to identify from scratch key concepts emerging from these data sets. Also, as this research was designed as an exploratory study, there was no predicted outcome. When analysing the data, I was open to any ideas or thoughts that emerged of relevance to the research questions. In this section, I describe the procedures for analysing the (1) focus group discussion transcripts, (2) online discussion threads and (3) one-to-one chat threads.

3.6.1 Focus Group Discussion Transcripts

With regards to the analysis of focus group discussions, first, I transcribed all four sessions, as one document verbatim in Microsoft Word (see Appendix IV for an example focus group discussion transcript), which were in Turkish. Second, I read the transcripts from my computer several times so as to familiarise myself with their content. Third, I crossed out the passages that were irrelevant to the topic under investigation, such as greetings, saying goodbyes, my questions and comments. Fourth,

before moving to coding, I highlighted the key elements in the form of words, sentences or quotes with different colours in the Word document which appeared to be relevant to the topic under scrutiny and hence, would help to address the research questions. Fifth, I started to carry out open coding, which involved assigning letters to meaningful codes for each segment in the transcripts (see Appendix V). This method enabled me easily to find statements that I wanted to check in transcripts and identify the source of the statement. The sixth stage in analysis of data was to undertake more detailed coding which involved clustering and organising the open codes into broader categories which describe the data. Table 3.20 below illustrates the codes, categories, and concepts that emerged from the analysis of the focus group discussion transcripts in relation to the first research question. Table 3.21 below shows the codes, categories, and concepts that were elicited from the analysis of focus group discussion transcripts in relation to the second research question. The purpose of this was to show how the data were responding to the research question throughout the whole process of the analysis.

Table 3.20: Focus group discussions: linking the codes, categories, and concepts to the first research question

Codes	Categories	Concept	RQ1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leaders make decisions • Group leaders allocate task 	Leading in a group	Peer Leadership	How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leaders explain vocabulary • Group leaders explain grammar • Group leaders show how to make sentences in English with linking words • Group leaders show how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources 	Teaching in a group		

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giving praise• Saying motivational phrases• Receiving praise• Receiving motivational phrases	Praise and motivational phrases	Peer Affective Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling comfortable with each other• Informal discussions• Humour	Camaraderie		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receiving feedback from group leaders• Giving feedback as a group leader	Group leaders' feedback	Peer Feedback	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All three group members give feedback on a draft of writing• All three group partners give feedback to the other group's final draft of writing	Collaborative feedback		

Table 3.21: Focus group discussions: linking the codes, categories, and concepts to the second research question

Codes	Categories	Concept	RQ2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leaders' decision making to facilitate the pre-writing stage of collaborative writing process 	Leading in a group	Peer Leadership	What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leaders are encouraged to carry out linguistic search from online sources or books • Group partners gain self-confidence in writing in English • Group partners develop learning from group leaders 	Teaching in a group		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving praise is motivational for writing in English • Receiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence towards writing in English 	Praise and motivational phrases	Peer Affective Support	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling comfortable reduces apprehension towards writing in English• Feeling comfortable enables revealing writing-related problems• Humour reduces apprehension towards writing in English	Camaraderie		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group leaders' feedback is instructional• Group leaders' feedback increases motivation towards writing in English	Group leaders' feedback	Peer Feedback	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giving feedback together increases self-confidence towards writing in English• Giving feedback together enables the participants to acquire a self-correction technique	Collaborative feedback		

3.6.2 Online Discussion Threads

As I discussed in the previous section, I did not want to purely depend on the participants' accounts on the interpretation of peer collaboration in the online short story writing activity. Therefore, in order to ensure the credibility of the data I collected from focus group discussions regarding this, I employed the online discussion boards to triangulate the first research question (How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?). I developed my own technique to analyse online discussion threads.

I started to analyse online discussion threads after I had analysed the focus group discussions. First, I transferred both groups' online discussion threads which lasted seven weeks, ten sessions for each group, to Microsoft Word documents (see Appendix VI for an example online discussion threads). As mentioned earlier, both groups of participants mostly discussed in Turkish how to produce a short story in English in their FB groups. I saved their online discussion threads (from session 2 to

10) on my computer as an individual document. Second, I printed both groups' online discussion threads and read them several times to familiarise myself with the content. Then, with a pencil, I crossed out some threads which include greetings, goodbyes and those comprising my comments. Subsequently, before moving to coding, I highlighted the key elements, such as words, sentences or quotes which appeared to be relevant for addressing the research question. Following this, I started to perform open coding, which involved assigning previously identified meaningful codes from the focus discussion group transcripts to each segment of the online discussion threads in letter form (see Appendix VII). The next stage in the analysis of online discussion threads was to cluster and organise the open codes into broader categories. After doing so, I noticed consistencies between the analysis of focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads. Consequently, I was able to identify particular episodes of peer collaboration in accordance with the categories that had emerged in focus group discussions.

Example:

In first focus group discussion, Ali described teaching in a group thus:

“When Selma [group leader] was explaining to me how to make a sentence by using the present continuous tense during our writing process was a sort of collaboration, I think.”

In the focus group transcript, I considered that Ali meant his group leader's explaining grammar was an example of peer collaboration for him. Therefore, I labelled this quotation as “group leader's explaining grammar”. When analysing the participants' discussion threads, I detected Ali's explanation from the focus group discussion in the discussion threads that are shown below and I also labelled this as “group leader's explaining grammar”.

Group B: Ali, Attila & Selma, from Session 2

Ali: *Can one of you tell me how to say “Sally is running fast in this picture” in English?*

Attila: *Which tense are you going to use?*

Ali: I think continuous

Selma: *Well, in continuous tense, you first use subject and then am/is/are and then a verb with –ing.*

Ali: *OK thanks so “This picture Sally is running fast.” Is this correct?*

Selma: *Well done! Ali 😊*

Attila: *OK I will only add “in” at the beginning.*

3.6.3 Online One-to-One Chat Threads

As I explained in the previous section, the method of online one-to-one chats was used to triangulate the second research question of this research (What are EFL learners’ perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?) I started to analyse online one-to-one chat threads after analysing the focus group discussion transcripts. First, I transferred each participant’s individual discussion of online one-to-one chat threads from FB chat to Word documents (see Appendix VIII for an example online one-to-one chat threads). Then, I saved all six participants’ online one-to-one discussion threads to an individual Word document to facilitate the analysis on my computer. Subsequently, I crossed out some threads which include greetings, goodbyes and those included my comments. Before moving on to coding, I highlighted the key elements, such as words, sentences or quotes which appeared to be relevant for addressing the research question. I then started to carry out open coding. In the open coding analysis, I gave meaningful codes to each segment in focus group discussion transcript. In order to organise the codes effectively, I gave each of them letters for identification (see Appendix IX). The final stage in the analysis of the online one-to-one chat threads was to cluster and organise the open codes into broader categories.

When I analysed the one-to-one chat threads, I saw consistencies with the findings from the focus group discussion transcripts. In addition, I also found some issues that some participants had not brought up during the focus group discussions such as when Selma complained several times about not benefitting from this writing activity in terms of her writing development. According to her, this was because, her other two group partners’ English was not as good as hers. Therefore, in her view, they did not assist her during the writing process.

Selma said, “*Well, I’m only helping my friends how to write better in English. This is the positive side of peer collaboration in this kind of writing. However, the negative side is I’m not learning much because unfortunately neither Attila’s nor Ali’s English is better than mine*” (Online one-to-one chats, week 3).

To sum up, I have explained how I analysed each data set and how I was able to relate them each other and find consistencies, which led to the identification of the codes.

See Appendix X for the final coding scheme from focus group discussion transcripts, online discussion threads and online one-to-one chat threads.

3.7 Ensuring Trustworthiness of the Research

As defined by Bryman (2008:700), trustworthiness is “a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research.” It is important for researchers to persuade a wider research community regarding their findings. They need to prove that the processes they use fit the accepted criteria in academic research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) proposed four criteria: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability, which qualitative researchers can employ in pursuit of establishing the trustworthiness of their research. These authors suggested these four criteria because the concepts of validity and reliability seemed not to be addressed in the same way in qualitative research.

1. *Credibility* can be used instead of internal validity
2. *Transferability* can be used instead of external validity/ generalizability
3. *Dependability* can be employed instead of reliability
4. *Confirmability* can be utilised instead of objectivity.

Shenton (2004) contended that even though these criteria which Guba (1985) constructed are from the early 80s, today, they are still accepted as relevant by many researchers. Shenton also employed these strategies to establish the trustworthiness of his PhD research, which was on the information-seeking behaviour of school-aged children. Regarding this study, I employed Guba’s (1985) strategies to ensure trustworthiness since believed it was suitable for my adopted research methodology.

3.7.1 Credibility

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing the trustworthiness of a research, because this provides confidence in the truth of the data and their interpretation. To ensure the credibility of the findings and interpretations, I used two strategies: (1) prolonged engagement and (2) triangulation. Prolonged engagement is a term used by Lincoln & Guba (1985), which means spending sufficient time in the field as a researcher to learn and understand the culture, social setting or phenomenon of interest. Also, it allows participants to get used to the researcher. In this study, I spent more than two months in the field. Even though it mostly took place outside the classroom, in an online setting, I was present at the school three or four times a week, not just for data collection but also spending time with the students and teachers, so as to familiarise myself with the school context. This facilitated my building trusting relationships and fostering a good rapport with the participants.

According to Richie (2003: 46), triangulation refers to “the use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of, extend, inferences drawn from the data.” It can take several different forms. Patton (2002: 556) divided the concept of triangulation into four types: (1) methods triangulation, (2) triangulation of sources, (3) analyst triangulation and (4) theory and perspective triangulation. To elaborate on these:

1. Methods triangulation aims to check out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection tools;
2. Triangulation of sources is intended to check out the consistency of different data sources with the same method;
3. Analyst triangulation attempts to use multiple analysts to review findings;
4. Theory and perspective triangulation proposes to use multiple theories or perspectives to interpret the data.

In the case of the current study, in order to enhance the credibility of the findings and their interpretations, as explained by Patton (2002) above, methods and analyst triangulations were employed. Regarding the methods triangulations, I employed focus group discussions, online discussion boards and online one-to-one chats with the participants. I also kept a research journal. As regards analyst triangulations,

different researchers, who included an associate professor from Turkey and two Turkish PhD students at King's College London, all of whom had credible research experience in the field and were familiar with my context took part in some of the coding and analysis of the .data collected from the participants. In Table 3.22 below, I showed each researcher who helped me with analyst triangulations and how much data they analysed with dates.

Table 3.22: Overview of analyst triangulations

Researcher	Data analysed	When?
An associate professor from Turkey	One A4 page from a focus group discussion transcript, 50 threads from focus group discussions and 37 threads from online one-to-one chats	Between 19 January 2015 to 28 January 2015
PhD student from King's College London	One A4 page from a focus group discussion transcript, 50 threads from focus group discussions and 37 threads from online one-to-one chats	Between 6 February 2015 to 10 February 2015
PhD student from King's College London	One A4 page from a focus group discussion transcript, 50 threads from focus group discussions and 37 threads from online one-to-one chats	Between 26 March 2015 to 2 April 2015

3.7.2 Transferability

Lincoln & Guba (1985) described transferability as the process of applying the findings of the research in one context to other similar contexts. Also, these authors referred to Geertz's (1973) phrase of 'thick description', which constitutes a way of achieving a type of external validity. By describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people. In order to ensure the transferability, I kept a research journal, which helped me provide detailed contextual information about the research context and the participants.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of findings over time (Guba, 1981; Bitsch, 2005). According to Cohen et al. (2007), participants' evaluation of the research findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the study should all be supported by the data received from the participants of the study to ensure their

dependability. To establish dependability in this current study, I employed a “peer examination” (Bitsch, 2005; Krefting, 1999) strategy. As described by Bitsch (2005) and Krefting (1999), this is used for checking the analysis process and findings with colleagues who have experience of qualitative research. According to Bitsch (2005), peer examination helps the researcher to feel honest about his/her research and receive useful feedback in terms of the data analysis procedure and the findings of the study. In this study, I collected and analysed the data in Turkish. Therefore, during the data analysis procedure, as discussed in the subsection 3.7.1 and shown in Table 3.21 above, I undertook frequent discussions with three researchers, which included one associate professor from Turkey and two Turkish PhD students at King’s College London, who had experience of qualitative research in the context of my research.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the study’s findings could be confirmed or corroborated by the focus of the inquiry as avoiding the biases of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Baxter & Eyles, 1997). In order to enhance conformability, I used an audit strategy as recommended by Guba (1981). This involves an external auditor following through the natural history or progression of events in a project to try to understand how and why decisions were made. I kept a research diary both for the pilot and main study and this helped me to focus on recording honestly what I observed and heard as well as reflecting critically on the processes and outcomes. I showed my research diary to my colleagues, as previously mentioned, and asked for and received their feedback.

3.8 Translation

All focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats were carried out in Turkish. Also, all the discussions carried out by participants in their FB groups were in Turkish. Both transcription and analysis of the collected data were carried out in Turkish to minimise any loss of meaning during the analysis phase. In the later stages of the data analysis illuminative quotes and threads were translated faithfully into English for the purpose of discussion and presentation. The colleague Turkish researchers previously referred to had sight of some of these translations and agreed them.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The present study followed the BERA Ethical Guidelines (2004) and received approval from King's College London Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix XI). For the pilot study, see Student Information sheet and Consent Form in Appendix XII, and parent/carer information sheet and consent form in Appendix XIII. For the main study, see Student Information Sheet and Consent Form in Appendix XIV, and parent/carer information sheet and consent form in Appendix XV.

I also obtained the required consent from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Izmir and the school where I recruited the participants, before I began both the pilot and main studies. I have addressed a number of ethical issues throughout this current research, such as obtaining informed consent, guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity as well as protecting the participants from risk or harm.

As I explained earlier, the pilot and main studies took place in an FB group. For ethical considerations, so as to protect the participants' privacy, a 'secret group' was created. As previously explained, Facebook (2014) categorises FB groups into three types: 1) open (public), 2) closed, and 3) secret and regarding the first, anyone can find and join the group. Non-members can also see the members of open groups and their posts. Regarding a closed group, anyone can find this group, but they need the administrator's approval to join. Moreover, in such a group, non-members can see the members but not see their posts. With respect to a secret group, no one can find it by a search and only the administrator of the group can send a private invitation to join to a prospective member. Non-members cannot see the members of this group or their posts.

Based on the above options, I decided that a secret group was the most suitable for both the pilot study and main study participants as I wanted to protect their privacy.

3.10 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained and justified the overall methodology of this thesis, which was informed by a qualitative research approach from a social constructivist perspective within the interpretive paradigm. It is an interpretivist framework that meets the needs of this research and the interpretative approach is how I set about conducting my research. I have shown my awareness of the weaknesses of a qualitative approach and explained my strategies to ensure trustworthiness. I conducted a pilot study with the aims of (1) determining the sample size for the main study, (2) devising the main study's collaborative online short story writing activity, (3) framing focus group discussions, and (4) firming up research questions for the main study. The key changes deriving from the pilot study were that some facilitator guidance was provided at the beginning of the short story writing and the short story topic was suggested to the participants. Moreover, the online discussion boards and online one-to-one chats were added as data collected tools. As a result, these changes impacted on the main study's methodology. I kept a research journal during the main study to provide contextual information about the main study and its participants. I have explained the procedures of the main study and provided some information about its participants based on the following eight topics that were gathered from the research journal entries: (1) participants' English learning history, (2) participants' engagement with English outside school hours, (3) participants' views on writing in English, (4) participants' views on writing exercises in English, (5) participants' views on collaborative writing, in general and CW in English, specifically, (6) participants' use of social networking sites, (7) participants' relationships with this study's group partners before and after the study, and (8) participants' use of technology to log into FB during the study (e.g. desktop computer, laptop, smartphone). Their responses to my questions showed varied English learning experiences and motivation, a reflective self-awareness of their levels and their learning needs, a lack of experience of collaborative learning in their English lessons and a belief that the study would in some way help them to improve their writing skills in English.

I have explained in detail the procedures for each method used, namely, focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats, and online discussion boards and show how the procedures fitted together to create the research design. The data sets also served a triangulation purpose as well as how I have worked to ensure the trustworthiness of this research. A key issue was to establish procedures in which the young participants would

feel comfortable to engage in this research. Feeling comfortable was an issue raised by the participants in their accounts of their language learning histories. Translation and ethical considerations have also been discussed and my attention to these emphasised. In the next chapter, I present and discuss the findings.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis. The data gathered from focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats, and online discussion boards were analysed by using an open coding analytical approach, which was explained in the previous chapter (Chapter 3).

This thesis has a focus on the perceptions of Turkish High School EFL students within a study about how to encourage EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to improve their writing skills in English through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise. I focused on two central aspects as in the following research questions:

- 1) How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
- 2) What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

As a result of the data analysis, three concepts: (1) peer leadership, (2) peer affective support and (3) peer feedback, emerged from the data. This chapter addresses these three concepts by relating them to the above research questions.

4.2 Peer Leadership

4.2.1 Introduction

In this section, I discuss the concept of peer leadership. I address the first research question by presenting the findings about how the two groups of three students interpreted peer collaboration as peer leadership in the online short story writing activity. I then address the second research question by recounting how these participants described the impacts of peer leadership on their writing development in English during their story writing.

As illustrated in Table 4.1 below, first, a series of similar codes were grouped together into two categories (1) leading in a group, and (2) teaching in a group. These two categories formed the concept of peer leadership. In the final stage, the codes and

categories under the concept, peer leadership, are linked to the research questions, thereby addressing them. The blue lines indicate the first research question and the red lines refer to the second.

Table 4.1: Overview of codes and categories under the concept of peer leadership

Codes	Categories	Concept	Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders make decisionsGroup leaders allocate tasks	Leading in a group	Peer Leadership	How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders' decision making to facilitate the pre-writing stage of the collaborative writing processGroup leaders' decision making causes lack of group planning			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders explain vocabularyGroup leaders explain grammarGroup leaders show how to make sentences in English with linking WordsGroup leaders show how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources	Teaching in a group		What are EFL learners' Perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders are encouraged to do linguistic search either from online sources or booksGroup leaders do not benefit from their group partnersGroup partners gain self-confidence in writing in EnglishGroup partners develop learning from group leaders			

In the following subsections (4.2.2 and 4.2.3), the codes and categories under the concept of peer leadership are explained in detail in relation to the research questions.

4.2.2 Interpreting peer collaboration as Peer Leadership

This subsection addressed the first research question: “How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?”. In order to respond to this research question, I analysed focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads. Based on the analysis of these data sets, one of the key features of peer collaboration during online short story writing that emerged was peer leadership. Table 4.2 below displays the codes and categories under the concept of peer leadership in relation to how participants interpreted peer collaboration as this.

Table 4.2: Overview of how participants interpreted peer leadership as peer collaboration

Codes	Categories	Concept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leaders make decisions • Group leaders allocate tasks 	Leading in a group	Peer Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leaders explain vocabulary • Group leaders explain grammar • Group leaders show how to make a sentence in English with linking words • Group leaders show how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources 	Teaching in a group	

Leading in a group refers to when one of the group partners was chosen to take up the role of a group leader by his/her group partners and led the group during the writing exercise. In the first session of the writing activity, I, the facilitator, initiated the group discussions for both groups in Facebook (henceforth, FB). For each group of participants, we had a discussion about the writing exercise and short story writing in

English. I explained to them at the end of the first session that from the second session onwards, it would be for them to take the responsibility to undertake the writing activity themselves without my guidance. I told them that I would attend all of their sessions, but would only be there as an observer. I also made it clear that I would not be involved in their group discussions unless they sought help from me. The reason why I did not want to be involved in the groups' discussions was to encourage the participants to collaborate among themselves when undertaking the writing exercise. As the participants reported that they did not have any previous experiences in collaborative writing in English (see Chapter 3, section 3.4), they asked me to give them some written instructions to help them initiate group discussions for the second session. Therefore, before the second session, I posted writing instructions (see Appendix III), which involved six picture frames to help them start group discussions in their FB groups. The participants in both groups joined their FB groups for the second session and they greeted me as well as their group partners. After the greetings, I observed that both groups took some time to begin the group discussions about undertaking the writing exercise. Specifically, group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), started the group discussion 10 minutes later and group B (Ali, Attila & Selma) took 14 minutes. In group A, Nila and in group B, Selma, initiated the group discussion. Nila and Selma were asked what they felt about initiating their group's discussion in the first meeting.

Nila said, *"To be honest with you, I was chatting together with the girls [Gonca and Deniz] about how should we start the discussion in our WhatsApp message group. The girls told me that I should first start the discussion [...] I think the girls know that I am the bravest one in our group"* (focus group discussion 1).

Selma commented, *"Before the first session, at school, I proposed to have a short meeting with the guys [Ali and Attila] about what we should do with our second session but the guys said they were both busy with other course subjects [...] In our session, obviously we had some difficulties to start the discussion because we were like fish out of water. We absolutely had no idea about what we are going to do. Attila created a group message in FB and we were discussing there how should we start and we were panicking because*

you were waiting there to see us working. I came up with some ideas about how we should write our short story through your guiding picture frames. I shared my ideas in our discussion group in FB so that you would see them. Actually, there was preparation going behind the curtains and I was the one who first acted on the stage [implying the FB discussion group]” (focus group discussion 1).

I observed that by the end of the second session, Nila was chosen as a group leader in group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) and Selma was selected in group B (Ali, Attila & Selma). In short, from the third session to the final session (10th session), these two participants performed the role of a leader in their groups. When I asked the participants in first focus group discussion what made them choose a group leader, all four who selected, indicated that they did this when it became clear that the facilitator guidance was no longer available.

Deniz said, “Generally, our English teacher tells us what we should do. In this [writing] exercise, as I’ve seen, we’re expected to undertake the exercise in a group without a teacher. However, in the second session, I couldn’t get involved much because there was nobody to tell me what exactly I was supposed to do. I saw Nila was making interesting suggestions for our story. She also seemed to be helpful to me and I proposed her to be the teacher of our group” (focus group discussion 1).

Ali noted, “Even though I was present in our FB group on time for the [second] session, I felt shy to initiate the discussion. [...] I waited for somebody who was confident and knowledgeable about what we’re doing to guide us. [...] I’m glad Selma initiated the group discussion. I think Selma not only started the group discussion, but also the collaboration for our writing exercise” (focus group discussion 1).

As explained by some of the participants, their decision to select a group leader was because of a need of somebody who was more confident and knowledgeable to chair the group discussions and make decisions about what to write in a session.

Gonca explains, “I think in collaborative activities somebody who is more confident and knowledgeable should conduct the group discussions and make

decisions for the group. [...] My understanding of collaboration involves a group leader and group partners. [...] What I believe is that without a group leader, I find it not very effective to maintain collaboration” (focus group discussion, 1).

Some participants reported that their decision to choose a group leader was based on their group partner’s English knowledge. That is, according to them, their group partner was suitable as leader because his/her English knowledge was better than theirs.

Attila recounted, *“I know that Selma’s English is better than mine and therefore, I proposed her to be our group’s head” (focus group discussion 1).*

The group leaders were asked what they thought about being in that role during the writing exercise in the fourth focus group discussion. Both group leaders believed that they were the ‘backbone’ of the peer collaboration during the writing exercise, because they helped their group partners keep on writing their short story.

Selma noted, *“I helped Ali and Attila as much as I could during the writing exercise. I showed them how to make a sentence in English or explained a grammar topic or the meaning of vocabulary and also when they lost their motivation towards writing in English, I was the one who motivated them. I had many responsibilities during this writing exercise. I think as a group leader I feel that I’m the backbone of peer collaboration in this writing activity” (focus group discussion 4).*

Nila added, *“I agree with Selma. As the leader of my group, I was also the backbone of the peer collaboration in this writing exercise. After having said that, I didn’t want to mean that I did all the work, but they [Gonca and Deniz] didn’t. Everybody had different roles in this writing exercise, but we worked together despite difficulties to produce our short story in English” (focus group discussion 4).*

Before moving to the presentation of the codes regarding the category, ‘leading in a group’, I present in Table 4.3 below the frequency of the recurring codes from the focus group discussions and online discussion threads as well as the number of participants who commented on these codes.

Table 4.3: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Leading in a group	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads	Number of participants* who commented
Group leaders make decisions	24	4
Group leaders allocate tasks	29	4

*Two groups of three were involved in this research

First, the code, “group leaders make decisions, refers to the explanations of four participants about the group leaders’ decisions about what to do at the beginning of each session. As mentioned earlier, both groups selected a group leader among their group partners by the end of the second session and from the third to the final session (10th session) they led their groups. From the third session to seventh sessions, the group leaders decided to produce drafts of writing for producing the short story in English in each session. In the eighth and ninth sessions, they decided to combine and edit their drafts. In the final session, the tenth, both group leaders together decided to give feedback on each other’s final draft of the short story. The group leaders had different attitudes and ways with regards to leading a group. Specifically, in group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), Nila, the group leader, usually discussed with other group members before she made decisions about what to do in a session. However, in group B (Ali, Attila & Selma), Selma, the group leader, never discussed with her group partners before she made decisions about what to do in a session. There follow some views from the participants on the group leaders’ approaches towards leading them.

Deniz said, “*I’m very glad that Nila is our group’s leader, because she cares about our ideas and suggestions before we start writing in a session. She always asks if we need to add anything to her decisions. She always motivates us when we don’t get some things in writing right. To be honest, I wouldn’t like a group leader who is bossy and always gives orders to their group partners*” (focus group discussion, 1).

Ali commented, *“Selma is an ideal teacher for me. She always tells us what we are going to do before we start the session. She is really good at giving instructions to us in the [writing] exercise. She answers our questions in a detailed way and corrects our writing.”* (focus group discussion 1).

In focus group discussions, four participants reported what peer collaboration in the writing exercise meant for them when the group leaders made decisions about what to do at the beginning of a session.

Ali stated, *“...what I consider collaboration is when Selma tells us what we should write at the beginning of each session. I think we save time and focus more on our short story rather than discussing how we should write”* (focus group discussion 1).

Attila commented, *“Even though in some sessions I didn’t like Selma’s decisions, I still approved of most of her decisions, because if we had started discussing how we should write, we could have spent hours in discussions and ended up writing nothing”* (focus group discussion 2).

Gonca reported, *“I like the way how Nila leads us in terms of proposing her ideas about what we can do at the beginning of each session. I think this is collaboration for me”* (focus group discussion 2).

Deniz added, *“I agree with Gonca. Nila suggests some ideas about how we can direct the story and asks our opinions. We negotiate first and then she makes the final decision about what to write and how to write in a session. I myself consider Nila’s making decisions for us as collaboration in this writing exercise”* (focus group discussion 2).

Second, the code, group leaders allocate tasks, refers to the recounting by four participants that their group leaders allocated individual writing tasks to them during the production of their short story in English between the third and seventh sessions. In relation to how the groups produced the collaborative piece of writing between the third and seventh sessions, at the beginning of a session, the group leaders made decisions about what to do that time and then allocated individual writing tasks to their group members and themselves. From group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), Gonca described how Nila, the group leader, allocated individual writing tasks to her group partners during

the writing exercise and from group B (Ali, Attila & Selma), Attila explained how Selma, the group leader executed this.

Gonca explained, *“At the beginning of each session, Nila usually came up with some ideas about our short story; she was telling us what we could write in a session. In a way, she was sharing her ideas with us. We commented on her ideas and later, she made the final decision and allocated individual writing tasks to each of us. Then, we wrote and posted it on our group discussion board [...] at the beginning it was easier for Nila to allocate individual writing tasks, because, as far as I remember, we started with describing the personal and psychical characteristics of our short story character then in another session, we divided the picture frames that you [me, the facilitator] gave us before we start the writing activity. However, as the writing activity moved on, we had to add on to the story from our imagination. Everybody had different suggestions about the course of events in our story, but Nila had to make the final decision about what we were supposed to write. Otherwise, we could not move on.”* (focus group discussion 4).

Attila explained, *“Before we start writing in each session, Selma was telling us what we had to write about and then gave our individual writing tasks. We were doing the tasks individually and Selma was usually helping us when we needed help during our individual writing tasks. After posting our tasks, Selma was correcting our mistakes and then combined our writing including hers and we signed out from the session”* (focus group discussion 4).

Having undertaken the individual writing tasks, the participants posted their individual writing pieces on their group's FB pages. The group leaders then corrected their partners' individual writing pieces and often, selected a group partner to correct the other's individual pieces of writing. Once the group partners had carried out their corrections of their individual writing pieces, they were asked to repost them on their group's FB page. In the final stage, the group leaders combined all the partners' individual writing pieces and produced a collaborative piece of writing by the end of the session.

Most of the participants considered key tasks given by their group leaders as individual writing tasks. For example, Ali recounted that Selma gave him one task of describing the physical features of a fictional character in their short story.

Ali said, “Selma, [the group leader] told me to write at least five sentences describing Sally’s [short story character] physical features. This is what I want from a writing exercise. I can’t suddenly write the whole story. It’s better for somebody to tell me step by step how I’m going to write it [story]. I think collaboration in this writing exercise is to have writing tasks in each session from Selma” (focus group discussion 1).

However, some participants in the fourth focus group discussion regarded tasks as mainly pertaining to linguistic correction. For example, Gonca noted that she considered collaboration in this online short story writing exercise was when Nila, the group leader, asked her to check the linguistic errors on her group partner, Deniz’s individual writing.

Gonca commented, “During our short story writing, I have been asked to do correction tasks by Nila. For example, every time we were posting our individual writing, she was asking me to check the correctness of grammar, vocabulary and spelling of hers and Deniz’s writing pieces. I quite liked being the editor of our group and I think my opinion of peer collaboration is when Nila gave us such tasks during the writing activity” (focus group discussion 4).

In brief, the following two codes: (1) group leaders make decisions about what to write at the beginning of a session and (2) group leaders allocate tasks to their group partners formed the category, ‘leading in a group’. This category and the following one ‘teaching in a group’ are associated with the concept of peer leadership. In what follows, I discuss ‘teaching in a group’ as related by the participants.

Teaching in a group refers to when the group leaders explained a grammar topic, how to use a vocabulary item in English in a sentence, how to make a sentence in English with linking words or how to check the linguistic mistakes through online sources. Table 4.4 below shows the frequency of recurring codes from the focus group discussions and online discussion threads along with the number of participants who commented on these codes.

Table 4.4: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Teaching in a group	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads	Number of participants* who commented
Group leaders explain vocabulary	19	4
Group leaders explain grammar	23	4
Group leaders show how to make a sentence in English with linking words	16	3
Group leaders show how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources	14	4

*Two groups of three were involved in this current research

As I mentioned earlier, when I, the facilitator, made clear that they would not receive any guidance from me during the writing exercise after the first session, the groups chose their leaders to undertake the writing activity. In group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), Nila, the group leader, usually discussed with the other group partners before she made decisions about what to write in a session. In group B (Ali, Attila & Selma), Selma, the group leader, never negotiated with her group partners before she made decisions about what to write in a session. After decisions about what to write in a session were made, the group leaders then allocated tasks about the writing exercise to their group partners. Group partners first undertook their writing tasks themselves and then group leaders combined all group partners' individual writing pieces including theirs and produced a collaborative writing piece by the end of a session. Teaching in a group usually occurred when group partners were undertaking their individual writing tasks. However, it also took place during the editing sessions, i.e. the eighth and ninth.

Mostly, it was the group leaders who performed the teaching in a group. However, other group partners stated that they helped the other group partner(s) when they sought help.

First, the code, group leaders explain vocabulary, refers to four participants recounting that when their group leaders explained how to use a word in English in a sentence, they considered this peer collaboration in this online short story writing exercise.

Ali said, *“I knew [the word] ‘excited’ but I didn’t know how to use this [word] in a sentence... I asked Selma to help me explain how to use ‘exciting’ in a sentence. She was very helpful to me. I think that was peer collaboration for me”* (focus group discussion 2).

The episode below shows how Selma explained to Ali how to use the word, “exciting”, in a sentence. This episode was taken from the online discussion threads written during the fourth session of group B (Ali, Attila & Selma).

Ali: Can you help me how to use ‘excited’ in a sentence? I want to say: Sally arkadaşı Rihanna ile buluşacağı için heyecanlıydı [Sally is excited about meeting her friend Rihanna.]

Selma: Well, this is an adjective so the formula for using this adjective is: was + exciting+ about...

Ali: Thank you Selma. Is this correct? Sally was excited about meet her friend Rihanna.

Selma: I forgot to tell you after -about you should add the verb +ing so it should be +meeting.

Ali: Now I’ve changed it. Thanks again.

Gonca commented, *“One of the good things about this writing exercise was Nila teaching me vocabulary. For example, I also get confused with the use of ‘make’ and ‘do’. In Turkish there is no such difference, we use the same word to mean make or do. However, Nila gave me a very good tip to keep in my mind and she explained really well to me how to use ‘do’ and ‘make’ in a sentence. From now on, I think I won’t get confused with these two words. I think Nila’s teaching me how to use ‘make’ and ‘do’ in a sentence was peer collaboration”* (focus group discussion 2).

The episode below illustrates how Nila taught Gonca how to use ‘make’ and ‘do’ in a sentence. This episode was taken from the online discussion threads written during the fifth session of group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz).

Gonca: Nila, I always get confused how to use ‘do’ and ‘make’.

Nila: Honey, what do you want to write?

Gonca: I was going to write: Kapi caldiginda Sally ev isi yapiyordu [when the doorbell rang, Sally was doing housework]. I’m not sure if I should use ‘do housework’ or ‘make housework’.

Nila: Okay darling. The rule is very simple. Listen to me. I’ve learnt this from my private tutor. When you’re doing a creative activity or doing something you choose to do, then use ‘make’ for example, you make a cake, make dinner, make drawings, make plans for the future, make friends... etc. But when you do things as responsibilities or duties, then use ‘do’. For example, you do your homework, do the dishes, do the laundry, do the shopping...etc. Understood?

Gonca: That was fabulous. Thank you my dear friend. ♥♥♥. I love you so much. Btw, I should use ‘do housework’ right?

Nila: Yes, my dear.

In the following example, Deniz describes how Nila helped her explain vocabulary when editing their short story in English during the eighth session.

Deniz stated, “*When we were editing our short story, Nila [the group leader] spotted my mistake about the phrase ‘uncared house’. I checked this word in an online dictionary. The word, ‘bakimsiz’ means “uncared” in English. I thought we could use uncared house when a house is not clean or tidy. However, Nila told me that I shouldn’t use uncared house and explained to me with example sentences... She said I should use ‘untidy or messy house’... Well I think when Nila explains the meaning of this word with examples to me this is collaboration*” (focus group discussion 3).

Even though most of the time, it was the group leaders undertaking the teaching in a group, often other group partners also helped them, such as when explaining vocabulary.

Nila, the group leader recounted that “*I sometimes get confused about what word goes with what word like my other friends. Gonca told me that her brother who is an IT teacher showed her how to check the combination of a word in English through Google. She really helped me even though I was the*

group leader. She said I should use the phrase I want to search in quotes and check the frequency in Google search. For example, I searched ‘make a mess’ and ‘do a mess’ in Google. I found out that ‘make a mess’ is more frequently used in English so I selected that” (focus group discussion 2).

Second, the code, group leaders explain grammar, refers to four participants recounting that their group leader helped them understand grammar topics during the writing activity and they considered that receiving help from them on grammar issues was collaboration during the writing activity.

Ali stated, “When Selma [group leader] was explaining to me how to make a sentence by using the present continuous tense during our writing process was collaboration, I think” (focus group discussion 1).

As a group leader, Selma added to Ali’s comment in the first focus group discussion.

Selma said, “Collaboration should not be considered that somebody should always receive help in the writing process. It can be the opposite. If you also help somebody you collaborate with your group partners because this is our short story and we need to help each other to proceed” (focus group discussion, 1).

The following episode was taken from group B’s (Ali, Attila & Selma) third session in FB discussion. In this episode, Selma explains to Ali how to use the simple present continuous tense in a sentence.

Ali: Can one of you tell me how to say Sally bu resimde hızlı koşuyor [Sally is running fast in this picture] in English?

Attila: Which tense are you going to use?

Ali: I think the continuous

Selma: Well, in the continuous tense, you first use the subject and then am/is/are and then a verb with –ing.

Ali: Ok thanks so “This picture Sally is running fast.” Is this correct?

Selma: Well done! Ali ☺

Third, the code, showing how to make sentences in English with linking words, refers to three participant's recounting that they had difficulties in making sentences in English with linking words and so, they asked for help from their group leaders. From these online discussion threads, as illustrated in Table 4.5 below, a complete list of linking words that the participants had difficulty making sentences with was created.

Table 4.5: *A complete list of linking words, with which participants had difficulty in making sentences in English*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either.... Or • Neither... nor • Not only... but also • Even though / Although • By the time
--

These three participants considered collaboration in this writing exercise was when their group leaders showed them how to make sentences in English with linking words. For instance:

Ali explained, *“I didn’t know how to use “even though” in a sentence, so I collaborated with Selma. She sent me a website where I can learn how to use these linkers with Turkish explanations. She took an example about the use of ‘even though’ from the website and explained to me how to use it [even though] in a sentence”* (focus group discussion 1).

Deniz recounted. *“I sometimes get confused in linking two sentences in English. Nila, [the group leader] helped me how to use these linkers in a sentence. I found when Nila helped me with linkers was collaboration”* (focus group discussion 1).

The episode below was taken from the fourth session of group A (Nila, Deniz & Gonca). As seen in the episode below, Deniz asks how to use the linking word “by the time” in a sentence in English and Nila [the group leader] assists her.

Deniz: Nila, I need your help.

Nila: Okay honey, what is the problem?

Deniz: I wanted to say Sally aşağı indiğinde telefon çoktan susmuştu [By the time Sally went downstairs, the phone had already stopped ringing.]

Deniz: I don't know which linker to use here. Could you help me. Should I use when?

Nila: Well, I think you should use '–by the time' here.

Deniz: I have just checked the meaning in Sesli Sozluk [online dictionary], it suits very well in this sentence.

Deniz: But I don't know how to use “-by the time” in a sentence.

Nila: Okay. Wait a second.

Nila: Check out this site:

<http://ingilizcedershanesi.blogspot.co.uk/2008/08/present-perfect-tense-with-just-already.html>

Nila: By the time the rain started, they had already returned from shopping. As you see in this example, the first sentence is past tense and the second one is past perfect tense. Make your own sentence this way.

Deniz: By the time Sally went downstairs, telephone had stopped?

Nila: Very good! I just want to add 'telephone had stopped ringing'

Deniz: Thank you very much my darling ☺

Fourth, the code, showing how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources, pertains to four participants recounting that those who had difficulties in spelling of words in English or who were unsure of the grammatical correctness of a sentence, were often directed by their group leaders to a website or a mobile application where they could get help. According to these four participants, when their group leaders showed them how to check their spelling or grammar mistakes through online sources during individual writing process, they considered this as being collaboration during the writing exercise.

Ali commented, “Selma noticed that I have spelling problems and therefore she assisted me. As I undertook the writing exercise through my phone, she suggested me to use an app [mobile application] called ‘Spell checker’. I downloaded this app in my phone and after that Selma explained me how to use it [...] I consider this collaboration in this writing exercise, because when

Selma helped my spelling problem she was not only helping me, but also helping us as a group to write our short story better (focus group discussion 1).

Deniz recounted that, *“Last Wednesday in a break, I was talking with Nila about my grammar mistakes in my individual writing task and Nila told me to use ‘Grammarly’ to check my grammar errors. I didn’t know there is such a website for grammar check. Nila showed me how to use the website from her phone. [...] This really worked well. I could make sentences easily and quickly without thinking of whether I was making mistakes or not”* (focus group discussion, 3).

To summarise, teaching in a group occurred when participants were working on their individual writing tasks given by their group leaders or when they were undertaking editing sessions of their short story. This category, ‘teaching in a group’ within the category of peer leadership was characterised as one of the key features of peer collaboration in the online short story writing exercise according to the participants’ accounts. Collaboration in this category, meant ‘teaching in a group’ was when group leaders explained vocabulary, a group topic, showed them how to make sentences in English with linking words or showed them how to check linguistic mistakes for themselves through online sources. In the following section, I explain how peer leadership, as one of the key features of peer collaboration in the online short story writing exercise, was considered to have an impact on participants’ writing development in English.

4.2.3 Impact of ‘Peer Leadership’ on participants’ writing development in English according to the participants

As explained in the previous subsection (4.2.2), ‘peer leadership’ emerged as a key features of peer collaboration in the participants’ narratives. In this subsection, I address peer leadership in relation to the second research question: “What are EFL learners’ perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?”. In order to respond to this question, I analysed the participants’ focus group discussion transcripts and online one-to-one chat threads. First, I explain the impact of peer leadership from the point of view of ‘leading in a group’ and then cover the ‘teaching in a group’ angle. Table 4.6 below displays an overview of the codes and

categories under the concept of peer leadership in relation to how this had an impact on the participants' English writing development in English.

Table 4.6: Overview of how 'peer leadership' has an impact on participants' writing development in English

Codes	Categories	Concept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leaders' decision making to facilitate the pre-writing stage of the group writing process Group leaders' decision making causes a lack of group planning 	Leading in a group	Peer Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leaders are encouraged to do linguistic search either from online sources or books Group leaders do not benefit from their group partners Group partners gain self-confidence in writing in English Group partners develop learning from group leaders 	Teaching in a group	

Leading in a group: As I mentioned in the previous subsection (4.2.2), the group leaders performed the role of a leader in their groups and most of the participants interpreted this as peer collaboration during the writing exercise. In the focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats, the participants were asked how their group leaders had an impact on their writing development in English during the writing exercise. As reported by most of the participants, the group leaders made decisions about what to write in a session and this facilitated the pre-writing stage of the group writing process. However, some of the participants also indicated that as decision-makers were generally the group leaders, ideas were not fully included in the pre-writing stages. The category, "leading in a group", which refers to the impact of peer collaboration in short story writing on the participants' writing development in English, was derived from grouping the codes in the table below. Table 4.7 illustrates the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants represented in these codes.

Table 4.7: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Leading in a group	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online one-to-one chats	Number of participants* who commented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leaders' decision making to facilitate the pre-writing stage of the group writing process 	29	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leaders' decision making causes lack of group planning 	24	3

*Two groups of three were involved in the research

First, the code, group leaders' decision-making to facilitate pre-writing stage of group writing process, refers to four participants' explanations that from the third to seventh sessions (the period when participants produced their short story), each began with group leaders' decision-making about how to write their short story and what it would include, which thus facilitated the pre-writing stage of group writing process, as I explained in subsection 4.2.2 (see 'leading in a group').

To recap what happened in group writing process, when I, the facilitator, gave the responsibility to groups to undertake the writing exercise themselves after the first session, the participants chose a group leader, who took over the leadership responsibility from the second session onwards. From the third to seventh sessions, they made decisions about what to write in a session and gave individual writing tasks to the group partners. By the end of a session, all the participants posted their individual pieces of writing to their FB group and the group leaders combined them into a collaborative piece of writing. During eighth and ninth sessions, the group leaders decided to compile and edit their drafts of these collaborative pieces of writing produced between the third to seventh sessions. In the final session, the tenth, both group leaders together decided to give feedback on each other's final draft of the short story.

In each group, the leaders had different attitudes about decision making. For example, in group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), Nila, the group leader, first listed her ideas about what particular part of the short story they should write in a session and then asked Gonca and Deniz's opinions. After a short discussion with Gonca and Deniz, Nila made the

final decision about what to write in a session. After this, Nila allocated individual writing tasks to each of her group partners. While in group B (Ali, Attila & Selma), Selma, the group leader, did not negotiate with Ali and Attila. She generated ideas about the short story and made the decisions about what to write in a session and then told each group partner what they had to do in terms of writing. Ali and Attila followed her instructions.

Deniz explained, *“If I had to do this [writing] exercise myself, I could never start it. I’m not good at writing in English at all. It takes me ages to generate ideas and put them in writing. When Nila generated ideas and made decisions about what and how we should write in each session helped me and our group a lot. I think this was one of the best things that helped my writing development in English so far. I wish I could do group writing with Nila in all writing exercises”* (focus group discussion 2).

Ali added, *“Handing over the responsibility to Selma in order to generate ideas about what to write for our story shouldn’t be considered as we [Attila and I] take the easy way out. This is a group work and we have a deadline. In order to save time, we need to find easy ways to reach our destination [...] Everybody has different capabilities in our group and we’re learning from each other. I observed Selma and learnt how Selma planned our short story before we write. Next time I can take the responsibility to do the planning for our group writing* (focus group discussion 2).

Second, to explain the code, group leaders’ decision making causes lack of group planning, when some of the participants’ ideas were not accepted by the group leader or group leaders’ decisions were not approved of by the participants, they started complaining about the decisions made regarding the writing. As a result, some suggested group planning should be considered.

Attila commenting in an online one-to-one chat, said, *“To be honest with you, I don’t like most of Selma’s decisions. She sometimes acts as if she knows everything. This week [sixth session], she asked me to describe how Sally met a guy and fell in love with him. Well, she wanted me to write a girly soap opera but I didn’t want it. That’s why, I made Sally fall in love with Bob and then I made him die in a car accident at the end. Selma got angry at me because of*

this. I had a little argument with her. I think she should allow group planning otherwise these small things demotivate me towards writing” (online one-to-one chat).

Gonca related, “Actually, Nila [group leader] seemed to have valued our ideas. but in reality she doesn’t. I suggested very interesting ideas about our short story, but she didn’t include any of them. I think she needs to have group planning... I think one of the disadvantages of group writing is that we didn’t have group planning” (online one-to-one chat).

In summary, peer leaders’ decisions prior to writing facilitated the pre-writing stage of group writing process for the participants. However, as the activity progressed, some of them made complaints about these decisions, particularly when their ideas were not accepted by their group leader or group leaders’ decisions were not approved of by them. Consequently, some of the participants suggested that group planning would have been better for the pre-writing stage of the collaborative writing process. In the following, I explain the category ‘teaching in a group’.

Teaching in a group: This was one of the categories of peer leadership that was revealed as being peer collaboration in the online short story writing activity. According to the participants’ contributions from focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats, ‘teaching in a group’ had both positive and negative impacts on the participants’ writing development in English. For example, the group leaders who often explained vocabulary, grammar or sentence structure to their partners considered this had a positive impact on their writing development in English, because they were encouraged to perform linguistic searches either online or from books. However, the group leaders complained that even though they helped their group partners to learn, they did not benefit from them in terms of learning. The participants who received explanations to their queries from the group leaders recounted that they felt themselves more confident when writing in English, because that person was available to assist them whenever they felt the need. Table 4.8 below displays the recurring codes in the category of ‘teaching in a group’ and illustrates the number of participants who commented on these codes.

Table 4.8: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Teaching in a group	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online one-to-one chats	Number of participants* who commented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leaders are encouraged to perform a linguistic search either from online sources or books 	18	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leaders do not benefit from their group partners 	20	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining self-confidence in writing in English 	24	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing learning from the group leaders 	22	3

*Two groups of three were involved in this current research

First, the code, group leaders are encouraged to perform a linguistic search either from online sources or books, refers to the group leaders' recounting that when they were explaining the meaning of vocabulary, a grammar topic, how to make a sentence in English with linking words or showing how to check linguistic mistakes in a piece of writing through online sources, they felt that they were encouraged to perform linguistic searches either using online sources or books. The group leaders considered their role in peer collaboration during the writing exercise was to help their group partners by responding to their questions and queries. In order to assist their group partners' questions and queries in a detailed and more helpful way, the group leaders carried out some searches either of online sources or books. They believed doing so had a positive impact on their writing development in English, because they now realised that they could learn independently from such sources.

Selma recounted, "As my friends [group partners] were asking questions during the sessions, I felt I had to answer their questions immediately. Therefore, I made my grammar books ready with me and opened all online dictionaries in front of my screen to help my friends" (focus group discussion 3).

Selma also commented how grammar and vocabulary searches either online or from books had an impact on her writing development in English during the activity.

As Selma explained, *“What our English teacher teaches us in terms of vocabulary and grammar is limited to the lesson hours. We need to learn English more outside the class hours to produce better English sentences, both spoken and written. Personally, I don’t like studying grammar and vocabulary if there was no exam or any particular purpose. However, during this [writing] activity, I did study grammar and vocabulary to be helpful to my friends. I helped them and also learnt how to learn English individually”* (focus group discussion 3).

Second, the code, group leaders do not benefit from their group partners, refers to group leaders’ commenting that even though they had said “teaching in a group” helped their writing development in English in focus group discussions, they raised complaints about this resulting in a lack of learning from their peers in online one-to-one chats.

Selma said, *“During this entire activity, I learnt nothing from Ali and Attila. I know that they learnt something from me which is great. However, I prefer individual writing than group writing. I think I can learn something myself rather than from my group partners. My group partners English should have been better than me so that I could learn something from them”* (online one-to-one chat).

Nila recounted, *“My understanding of learning is that somebody has to be more knowledgeable than you so that you can learn something. I never want to say this to my friends but it is obvious that my English knowledge is better than them [Gonca and Deniz]. I must say, I learnt nothing in terms of English or writing in English from my group partners during this writing exercise”* (online one-to-one chat).

Third, the code, group partners gain self-confidence in writing in English, refers to four participants recounting about how their group leaders’ explanations to their queries about vocabulary and grammar enabled them to gain self-confidence in writing in English.

Deniz stated, *“One of my main difficulties in writing in English is that I have limited vocabulary and lack of grammar knowledge. Whenever I write in English myself, I quit in the middle because of this. However, in this writing exercise, Nila helped me most of the time when I have queries about grammar and vocabulary. I wanted to write more, especially towards the end, because I gained self-confidence in writing in English (online one-to-one chat).*

Attila commented, *“I think what stops me from writing in English when writing individually is usually the questions I ask myself. These questions are mostly about grammar and vocabulary. I can’t answer these questions and therefore, I can’t produce sentences in English... However, in this writing exercise there is somebody helping us to answer our questions and guide us how to write in English” (focus group discussion 2).*

Fourth, the code, group partners develop learning from group leaders, pertains to four participants commenting how they acquired learning to write in English better owing to their group leaders’ greater experience. When the group leaders realised that their partners faced problems in making sentences in English at the beginning of the writing exercise, they shared their own techniques to help them make sentences in English. Selma, the group leader of group B (Ali, Attila & Selma) described this in the second focus group discussion as follows:

“When I make a sentence in English, I always keep the subject+verb+object formula in mind. In Turkish, the subject can be used either at the beginning or at the end of a sentence or sometimes hidden in a sentence. I think when Ali and Attila write in English individually, they get confused about the sentence order in English. Also, when they write in English, they want to translate all of their ideas from Turkish to English literally, I believe this is wrong. We should try to express our ideas in English as simply as possible, because this isn’t our first language and we can never reflect our ideas in English as if our first language” (focus group discussion 1).

Nilä added that *“I recommended my friends use Google Translate if they get stuck in writing in English. I think Google Translate is a very helpful tool to start writing in English. Also, some online websites, which explain English grammar topics in Turkish with formulas, are helpful to understand how to make a sentence in English”* (focus group discussion 1).

According to some of the participants, their group leaders’ techniques for helping them write in English had a positive impact.

Attila commented, *“I believe that Selma is a very good teacher for us [Attila himself and Ali], because she noticed that Ali and I were having problems when writing in English individually. Therefore, she gave us some tips about how to write better individually. [...] Selma’s tips for writing in English improved my writing in English. At the moment I feel more confident about writing in English”* (focus group discussion 4).

In summary, based on participants’ accounts, the category, ‘teaching in a group’ had both positive and negative impacts on their writing development in English. As reported by group leaders, they were encouraged to perform linguistic searches either from online sources or books, when they need to explain the meaning of vocabulary, a grammar topic, how to make a sentence in English with linking words or to show how to check linguistic mistakes to group partners. As reported by most of the participants, they gained self-confidence about writing in English when their group leaders responded to their questions or queries about grammar or vocabulary. As also reported by the group partners, when the leaders noticed that they were having problems in making sentences in English at the beginning of the writing exercise, they shared their own techniques to help them. In general, the group participants contended that they had developed learning from their group leaders and this had a positive impact on their written English. However, the group leaders recounted in online one- to-one chats that they felt they themselves had not benefited from their group members in terms of learning English or writing in the language.

4.2.4 Summary of the Concept, ‘Peer Leadership’

In this section, I presented the findings of the concept, peer leadership, thus addressing the two research questions of this current research. In the first subsection, I illustrated the codes and categories that comprise the concept, peer leadership, with a table. In the

second, I explained the findings regarding peer leadership in relation to the first research question: “How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?” The findings reveal that one of the key features of peer collaboration in the writing exercise that emerged was the concept of peer leadership. The groups found it necessary to select a group leader in order to begin the writing activity. The groups selected their group leaders from among their groups and depended to a large extent on their group leaders in terms of how to undertake the writing exercise during the activity. In the light of participants recounting, peer collaboration concerning the concept of peer leadership occurred when group leaders made decisions about what to write at the beginning of a session and allocated tasks to their group partners. In addition, when group leaders explained vocabulary or a grammar topic or showed how to make a sentence in English with linking words or how to check linguistic mistakes in a piece of writing through online sources, these were reported as the times when peer collaboration took place during the writing exercise.

In the third subsection, “impacts of peer leadership on participants’ writing development in English”, I elucidated the findings with respect to the second research question of this research which was: “What are EFL learners’ perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?”. The findings of this question indicated that peer leadership as one of the key features of peer collaboration had both positive and negative impacts on participants’ writing development in English during the writing activity. Regarding the group leaders, positive aspects of peer leadership as peer collaboration was that the participants were encouraged to do vocabulary and grammar searches online or from books so as to help their group partners. Group leaders believe this helped their writing development in English. However, group leaders indicated that they felt that they did not benefit from their group partners.

From the group partners’ side, some of them asserted that peer leaders’ decision making for them facilitated pre-writing stage of collaborative writing process. Also group partners reported that group leaders’ responding to their queries about grammar and vocabulary lead them to gain confidence in writing in English, and when group leaders shared techniques of learning vocabulary and grammar help group partners, this was useful to develop learning from their group leaders.

On the other hand, some group partners indicated that as group leaders already made decisions for them, this caused a lack of group planning during the group writing process.

4.3 Peer Affective Support

4.3.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings in relation to the concept of peer affective support with regards to the research questions of this current study. I address the first research question, by explaining how the two groups of three participants interpreted peer collaboration as ‘peer affective support’ in online short story writing. I then address the second research question by describing the findings about impacts of peer affective support on the participants’ writing development in English during the writing activity. As shown in Table 4.9 below, first, a series of similar codes were grouped together into two categories (1) peer affective support, and (2) camaraderie. Second, these two categories formed the concept of peer affective support. In the final stage, to present the codes and categories under the concept, ‘peer affective support’, I linked them to the research questions. The blue lines pertain to the first research question and the red lines indicate the second.

Table 4.9: Overview of codes and categories under the concept of peer affective support

Codes	Categories	Concept	Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving praise • Saying motivational phrases • Receiving praise • Receiving motivational phrases 	Praise and motivational phrases		How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in online short story writing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving praise is motivational for writing in English • Receiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence towards writing in English 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling comfortable with each Other • Informal discussions • Humour 	Camaraderie	Peer Leadership	What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling comfortable reduces apprehension about writing in English • Feeling comfortable enables sharing of writing-related problems • Humour reduces apprehension about writing in English 			

In the following subsections (4.3.2 and 4.3.3), categories and codes under the concept of peer affective support are presented in detail in relation to the research questions of this current study. Finally, the last subsection (4.3.4) concludes this current section.

4.3.2 Interpreting peer collaboration as ‘Peer Affective Support’

This subsection addresses the first research question: “How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in online short story writing?” In order to respond to this question, I analysed the focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads. Based on the analysis of these data sets, one of the key features of peer collaboration during online short story writing that emerged was ‘peer affective support’. As mentioned earlier, a series of similar codes were grouped into two categories: (1) praise and motivational phrases, and (2) camaraderie. These two categories were then grouped and the concept of peer affective support was elicited. Table 4.10 below provides an overview of how the participants interpreted peer collaboration as ‘peer affective support’ during the online short story writing.

Table 4.10: Overview of how the participants interpreted peer collaboration as ‘peer affective support’

Codes	Categories	Concept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving praise • Saying motivational phrases • Receiving praise • Receiving motivational phrases 	Praise and motivational phrases	Peer Affective Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling comfortable with each other • Informal discussions • Humour 	Camaraderie	

Praise and Motivational Phrases: According to the participants’ narratives in the focus group discussions, “praise” refers to giving or receiving phrases which show expressions of approval when a participant achieved a task during the writing exercise. On the other hand, “motivational phrases” pertains to giving or receiving phrases, which motivated the participants when they were facing difficulties during the writing activity. Table 4.11 below presents a complete list of the praise and motivational phrases were

used by the participants during the writing exercise. These phrases were gathered during the analysis of participants' contributions in the focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads.

Table 4.11: A complete list of the praise and motivational phrases used by the participants during the writing exercise

Praise	Motivational phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well done! • Excellent • Brilliant • Good work • Bravo • You're the best leader • You're a great leader • You're number 1 • You've got it • Superb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You're doing well • Don't give up • Keep on writing • You can do it • You can write it • We believe you can do it • We're with you

Before exhibiting the codes regarding the category "praise and motivational phrases", I present Table 4.12 below showing the frequency of recurring codes from the focus group discussions and online discussion threads as well as the number of participants who commented on these codes.

Table 4.12: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Praise and motivational phrases	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads	Number of participants* who commented
• Giving praise	17	5
• Receiving praise	14	4
• Saying motivational phrases	16	3
• Receiving motivational phrases	22	4

*Two groups of three were involved in this current research

First, the code, giving praise, refers to five participants recounting that giving praise to group partners meant peer collaboration for them during the writing exercise. According to the leaders of groups, when they praised their group partner(s), they thought they were helping increase peer collaboration in the writing exercise.

Nil, the first group's leader (Nil, Gonca & Deniz) commented, *"Whenever I said: 'well done, excellent and good work', I noticed Gonca and Deniz got involved in the [writing] exercise more. I used these words more often to encourage them to do more work. I think I enabled them to work together with my praise [laughter]"* (focus group discussion 4).

However, even though Selma, the group B's leader (Ali, Attila & Selma) believed her praise increased peer collaboration in the writing exercise, she reported that she used praise cautiously so as to retain her authority over her group partners.

Selma said, *"In my opinion, giving praise is important because when you praise your group partners, you motivate them and encourage them to collaborate with the group. However, if you use praise too often then they might get spoiled and they won't listen to you again. [...] I used praise with Ali and Attila when I felt they really deserved praising"* (focus group discussion 4).

The participants who received praise from their group leaders commented that they also reciprocated this when they helped them. Those who did so, used the following phrases when praising their group leaders: "You're a great leader, you're the best leader, and you're number 1". According to them, giving praise to the leaders was important, because it was feedback that maintained peer collaboration during the writing exercise, which increased the motivation of group leaders to lead their groups.

Deniz said, *"...how we treat each other is very important for how we work together to produce our story. In my understanding, giving praise is collaboration in this writing exercise, because when we [Deniz and Ayse] gave praise to Deniz [group leader], we not only appreciated her support for us but also increased her motivation to lead us"* (focus group discussion, 3).

Ali recounted, *“Whenever I said: ‘you’re a great a leader’ to Selma, I noticed she got happy and this had an effect on her support for me in a positive way. In my opinion, group partners should help each other to reach their goals in such group exercises (focus group discussion, 3).*

Second, the code, receiving praise, refers to four participants recounting that receiving praise from group leaders was considered as collaboration, because whenever they received it, they felt that their group leaders verified what they had done was correct and therefore, they felt they were on the right track.

Ali commented, *“We [students] usually expect our teacher to praise us when we answer her questions correctly. In this group work, I also expected Selma [the group leader] to praise me when I achieved something about writing in English...For me this [receiving praise] is collaboration in this writing” (focus group discussion 2).*

Deniz added, *“I noticed in this writing exercise that whenever I doubted if I had made a meaningful sentence in English or not, I had a chance to ask Nila [group leader], whenever she gave praise. This makes me feel that I made a meaningful sentence in English. I believe praising a group partner is important when working together in such a type of writing exercise in English” (focus group discussion, 3).*

Third, the code, saying motivational phrases, refers to three participants reporting that saying motivational phrases to their group partners was collaboration for them during the writing exercise. Those who commented on this code during the focus group discussions were Nila and Selma, the leaders of both groups and Gonca, one the partners of group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz).

As I mentioned earlier, the participants used motivational phrases (see Table 4.11 above) when their group partners faced difficulties during the writing activity. These difficulties mainly stemmed from a failure to make sentences in English individually, not being able to find appropriate English vocabulary or having a lack of motivation to write in English. For example, according to Selma, the group leader of group B, she used these phrases: ‘keep on writing. You can write it’ frequently to their group partners, especially when she noticed they were struggling to make a sentence in English.

Selma described, *“In some sessions, I gave Ali and Attila individual writing tasks about the completion of our short story. I noticed that they were having difficulties in writing in English individually. If I helped them individually, it would take ages. Therefore, whenever they needed my support, I told them ‘keep on writing! You can write it’ to encourage them to write in English”* (Focus group discussion, 2).

Nila, the leader of group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), provided motivational phrases, such as “You can do it, don’t give up, we’re with you and we believe you’ll do it.” She believed these affected her group partners’ moods in a positive way and kept them writing in English. According to Nila, one of the key features of collaboration in writing was to keep all group partners producing and thus, proceeding towards the completion of their short story. Consequently, when her partners felt themselves poor at writing in English, she believed it was one of her responsibilities as a group leader to motivate them to do so.

Nila explained, *“I think as a group leader, one my responsibilities is to motivate my group partners when they feel that they can’t write in English. As part of collaboration, all participants should produce and show progress for our target [writing a short story] [...] I believe saying these phrases: ‘you can do it, don’t give up, we’re with you and we believe you’ll do it’ change their mood in a positive way and miraculously they could then write in English.... It’s hard to explain this but I think you give them the feeling that we’re with you. It’s still okay, if you still make mistakes when writing in English”* (focus group discussion, 2).

Apart from the group leaders, Gonca, one of the partners of the first group, contended that when she said “we’re with you, don’t give up” to her group partner Deniz, this to her was engaging in peer collaboration. According to Gonca, Deniz struggled when writing in English individually during the writing exercise. From time to time, she sent her private messages to encourage her to do so.

Gonca recounted, *“I noticed Deniz was always the last person who completed her individual writing task. I sent her a private message and asked her if everything is OK?. She told me that she couldn’t write as well as Nila and*

me. She said she wanted to drop out of the writing. I told her that Nila and I were with her and she shouldn't give up. I told her to give it a try. Whenever she wrote something, I was always praising her. I think Deniz made good progress by the end of the writing exercise" (focus group discussion, 4).

Fourth, the code, receiving motivational phrases, refers to four participants' explanations that motivational phrases represented peer collaboration for them during the writing exercise. The students who commented in this manner were: Gonca and Deniz from group A [Nila, Gonca & Deniz] and Ali and Attila from group B (Ali, Attila & Selma).

Ali said, "I think hearing some motivating words, such as 'don't give up, you can do it', from Selma changed my mood in a positive way and made me continue writing even if I was struggling. These motivating words were important elements of collaboration for me in this writing exercise (focus group discussion 2).

Deniz added that she perceived collaboration as receiving motivational phrases from Nila, the group leader when she faced difficulties in writing in English individually during the writing exercise. According to Deniz, Nila was more helpful in terms of giving motivational phrases than Gonca, because to Deniz, Nila was more knowledgeable and experienced than her when it came to English in general and writing in English, in particular.

Deniz stated, "When I hear these words, 'you can do it, or don't give up' from Nila, it affects my motivation in a positive way than when I receive the same words from Gonca. I think this is because Nila is more knowledgeable in English and she knows how to write in English well. Obviously, when you hear these words from her [Nila], immediately you get motivated and continue writing in English even if you're struggling (focus group discussion 2).

In brief, this category, 'praise and motivational phrases' comprises the following codes: (1) Giving praise, (2) Receiving praise, (3) Saying motivational phrases, and (4) Receiving motivational phrases. This category, 'praise and motivational phrases and the other category 'camaraderie' formed the concept of peer affective support. In the following, I describe the category, 'camaraderie'.

Camaraderie: According to the participants who commented, camaraderie refers to a good rapport being created among the peers during the writing exercise. As the outcome of the analysis of the focus group discussions and online discussion threads revealed, this was considered a key feature of peer collaboration. It comprises three codes, which are: (1) feeling comfortable with each other, (2) informal discussions, and (3) humour. Table 4.13 below presents the frequency of recurring codes from the focus group discussions and online discussion threads along with the number of participants who commented on them.

Table 4.13: *Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants*

Camaraderie	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads	Number of participants* who commented
• Feeling comfortable with each other	19	5
• Informal discussions	21	4
• Humour	15	4

*Two groups of three were involved in the current research

First, the code, feeling comfortable with each other, refers to five participants recounting about feeling comfortable with their group partners when writing together during the writing exercise. For example, Ali claimed he felt so, because he wrote together with the friends he is familiar with and he believed this was one of the features of peer collaboration during the writing exercise.

Ali explained, “*My group partners are my classmates and friends. I’ve known Attila since primary school. We’re best friends. I’ve known Selma since the first grade in high school. Obviously, the fact that we know each other made me feel comfortable when doing this writing exercise, because I could tell them when I faced problems and sought help. They didn’t judge me at all. Selma was a very good teacher and Attila was a good partner who supported me whenever*

I had difficulty writing in English. I think knowing each other is a sort of collaboration in this writing exercise” (focus group discussion 4).

On the other hand, Deniz said that she felt comfortable when undertaking the writing exercise with her group partners, because they were both her best friends.

Deniz explained, “I felt comfortable when working with Gonca and Nila, because both of them are my darlings and my best friends. I love them so much. They’re both hardworking students as well and they helped me a lot during the writing exercise. On the other hand, boys are usually naughty and irresponsible when it comes to group work, so I prefer working with these girls [Gonca and Nila] than other girls in the classroom (focus group discussion, 2).

Second, the code, informal discussions, refers to four participants’ explanations that use of informal language in the participants’ discussions in their Facebook groups was peer collaboration during the writing activity. As aforementioned, they used Turkish to discuss in order to produce the short story in English. As the researcher and facilitator of this current research, I observed that the participants were using formal language in their discussions in the second and third sessions. The episode below was taken from group A’s (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) third session to illustrate how they were addressing each other at the start of a session.

Nila: Good evening my friends. Are you both there?

Gonca: I’m here! Good evening Nila.

Deniz: I here too! Good evening Nila.

Nila: If you’re ready. Shall we start?

Deniz: Yes, we can start.

Gonca: Okay. We can start.

However, after the third session, participants’ language use in discussions changed from formal to informal. When I asked the students in the first and second focus group discussions what made them engage in and eventually drop the formality of discussions, all six participants agreed that the main reason was with regards to how they saw my role as the facilitator change.

They explained that at the beginning they regarded me as one of their teachers and thus, felt the need to show respect to me, which was why they use a formal language when discussing with their group partners. This episode below was taken from group A's (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) fifth session.

Nila: Hello my darlings ♥♥♥ you there?

Gonca: Yes, my sweetheart. I'm here.

Nila: Where is Deniz?

Gonca: She'll be here in a minute. She sent me a text. She just came home from shopping with her mum.

Nila: Okay. Let's wait for her then.

Gonca: Let's listen to this song while waiting for Deniz.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUmZp8pR1uc> [Amy Winehouse-Rehab]

Deniz: Sorry being late. Here I'm my darlings. I love you ♥♥♥

Gonca: love you

Nila: ♥♥♥

As seen in the above episodes. Group A's (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) group partners were using more formal language when addressing each other in session 3, but during session 5, the group partners used less formal language, writing terms of endearment, such as 'darling' and 'sweetheart', as well as inserting emoticons to express their emotions. When analysing both groups' discussion threads in FB, I found that group A's group partners were using more terms of endearment than group B's (Ali, Attila & Selma) group partners. For example, in group A words and phrases, such as 'darling', 'sweetheart', 'love', and 'my lovely friend(s)'. In group B, Ali and Attila were addressing each other as 'mate', 'buddy' and 'pal'. Ali and Attila were usually addressing Selma by her name, but sometimes called her 'princess', 'beauty' and 'love' in order to pay her a compliment. Selma usually addressed Ali and Attila by their names, but sometimes used the words: 'guys', 'boys' and 'folks'.

The second reason for the initial formality was that as the participants did not have any prior experience of group exercises, they therefore did not know how to address each other and so they used the language of discussions of group exercises in the classroom.

Gonca stated, *“Well, there were two main reasons why we [Gonca, Deniz and Nila] decided to use formal language in our discussions. The first reason was we’re used to using formal language in the classroom in front of our teacher and in this writing exercise to show our respect to you, we decided to use formal language at the beginning. However, in time we built rapport with you. You treated us like a friend instead of a teacher, so we felt comfortable when undertaking the exercise with you and therefore, started using informal language when discussing with each other. The second reason was this was the first time in our lives that we have been undertaking a group work exercise so none of us knew how to discuss in group work. Nila [the group leader] created a WhatsApp group to discuss how we should address each other when discussing for the writing exercise”* (focus group discussion 1).

Attila added that the fact that the writing exercise took place in an FB group made him feel comfortable and therefore, he decided to use informal language when discussing with his group partners.

Attila said, *“Usually, when I chat with my friends on Facebook, I use an informal language. For example, I say ‘slm’ instead of selam [Hello in Turkish]. I felt comfortable when undertaking the writing exercise in a Facebook group, because we could use informal language in our group discussions and I thought this enabled us to work together better”* (Focus group discussion 1).

Third, the code, humour, pertains to four participants contending that the humour that emerged when undertaking the writing exercise was part of peer collaboration. These four participants considered humour as funny stories which created laughter among them during the writing exercise.

Attila said, *“In the third session, Selma gave an individual writing task to me and Ali. I was a bit of anxious about the outcome of my writing. I didn’t want to share it with my friends. I asked Ali to post his writing first. When he posted, I laughed a lot in a good way of course. Selma had asked Ali to describe the physical features of our story character Sally. Ali described a monster girl with two heads and five hands. Ali’s humour made me relieved and I shared my*

writing. I found this humour element in the writing exercise collaboration because humour helps us overcome our fears towards writing in English” (focus group discussion 1).

The episode below was taken from the fourth session of group B (Ali, Atilla & Selma), during which Selma, the group leader, allocated individual writing tasks to her group partners. She asks Ali to describe the physical features of their short story character Sally and asks Atilla to describe her personality traits. This episode presents the discussions among the participants when humour emerged.

Selma: Are you ready to post your writings. We’re running out of time. Come on!

Atilla: Can you first post your writing Ali?

Ali: OK. One minute.

Ali: Here is my writing:

Sally is beautiful girl. She has blue eyes and yellow hair. Everybody loves her. She has two heads and five hands. She has twenty five fingers. She can play pioano [piano] very quickly. She has a small mouth. She eats slowly. She very tall. Her height is 1.90 cm. She thinks she can’t find a boyfriend because she is very tall.

Atilla: hahahaaha that’s funny...

Selma: I agree with Atilla... I laughed a lot... very original description of Sally... I’ve never pictured her before.

To summarise, this category, ‘camaraderie’ under the concept of peer affective support was characterised as one of the key peer collaboration features in the online short story writing based on the participants’ accounts. The category comprises the following codes: (1) feeling comfortable with each other, (2) informal discussions, and (3) humour. They are interrelated in that deciding to use informal language - sometimes very informal as in the use of affectionate names like ‘honey’ and ‘darling’ - led the participants to feel comfortable with each other and humour made them even more relaxed when undertaking the task. In the following subsection, I describe how peer affective support interpreted as one of the key features of peer collaboration had an impact on the participants’ writing development in English during the writing exercise.

4.3.3 Impacts of ‘Peer Affective Support’ on the participants’ writing development in English according to the participants

In the previous subsection (4.2.2), the concept peer affective support was asserted as being one of the key features of peer collaboration in online short story writing in relation to the first research question. In this subsection, I address ‘peer affective support’ in relation to the second research question: “What are EFL learners’ perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?” In order to respond to this question, I analysed the participants’ focus group discussion transcripts and online one-to-one chat threads. In this subsection, I addressed ‘peer affective support’ as to the second research question: In this subsection, I describe how ‘peer affective support’ had an impact on participants’ writing development in English through the participants’ own accounts. First, I explain the impact of peer affective support from the ‘praise and motivational phrases’ angle and then, I move to presenting the relevant findings from the ‘camaraderie’ perspective. Table 4.14 below illustrates how peer affective support had an impact on the participants’ English writing development during the writing activity.

Table 4.14: Overview of how ‘peer affective support’ has an impact on participants’ writing development in English

Codes	Categories	Concept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving praise is motivational for writing in English Receiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence about writing in English 	Praise and motivational phrases	Peer Affective Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling comfortable reduces apprehension about writing in English Feeling comfortable enables participants to reveal their writing-related problems Humour reduces apprehension with regards to writing in English 	Camaraderie	

Praise and Motivational Phrases: As I mentioned in the previous subsection (4.3.2), the participants interpreted peer collaboration during the writing exercise as: (1) giving praise, (2) saying motivational phrases, (3) receiving praise and (4) receiving motivational phrases. I grouped these participants' interpretations of peer collaboration under the category of praise and motivational phrases. In the focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats, the participants were asked how these interpretations of peer collaboration had an impact of their writing development during the writing exercise. According to them, receiving praise was motivational for writing in English and receiving motivational phrases increased their self-confidence about writing in English. Table 4.15 below displays the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants who commented on them.

Table 4.15: The frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants who commented on these codes

Praise and motivational phrases	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads	Number of participants* who commented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving praise is motivational for writing in English 	17	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence towards writing in English 	22	4

*Two groups of three were involved in the current research

First, the code, receiving praise is motivational for writing in English, refers to four participants recounting that receiving praise during the writing exercise from their group leaders motivated them to write in English better. To recap, praise was mostly given by the group leaders to show expression of approval when a group partner achieved an individual writing task during the writing exercise. The participants who commented that receiving praise was motivational for writing in English claimed that this per se had a positive influence on their moods and therefore, galvanised them into performing better.

Deniz said, *“At the beginning of the writing exercise, I was not willing to share my individual writing with Nila and Gonca, because I was feeling that it wasn’t very good. However, when I shared it with my group partners, they, especially Nila [group leader], liked it very much and she said to me ‘well done’. After hearing that word, I engaged in writing in English individually in the following sessions”* (Focus group discussion 2).

Attila claimed that words are powerful and some can change one’s mood in a good way, while others can be demotivating.

Attila contended, *“I think words are very powerful. You can change the mood of a person with one single word. When I heard words like ‘well done!’ or ‘Excellent’ from Selma [the group leader], this made me very happy and I felt motivated to write in English”* (focus group discussion 2).

Second, the code, receiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence towards writing in English, refers to four participants stating that receiving motivational phrases from their group leaders made them gain self-confidence about writing in English. To recap, motivational phrases were mostly given by the group leaders urge on group partners who faced difficulties during the writing activity. Ali described how such phrases increased his self-confidence towards writing in English with a metaphor about at audience at a boxing match.

Ali explained, *“At a boxing match, the audience usually say some words, such as ‘keep on, you can do it, don’t give up now’ and especially in films, after hearing these words, boxers stand up and keep fighting with their opponents. This writing exercise for me was like a boxing match. Every time I felt weak when it comes to writing in English, Selma’s [the group leader] motivating words made me gain self-confidence and keep on writing [in English]”* (focus group discussion, 2).

Deniz added to Ali’s comment, saying, *“I think we see our group leaders as boxing coaches. If we don’t have their motivational support, we feel that we lose the match [laughter] [...] Nila’s motivating words helped me feel more confident about myself writing in English during the [writing] exercise”* (focus group discussion, 2).

To summarise, based on participants' accounts, the category, 'praise and motivational phrases' under the concept of peer affective support had positive impacts on their writing development in English. In focus group discussions, they centred on how receiving praise was motivational and it increased their self-confidence with regards to writing in English. In what follows, I explain how the category, 'camaraderie' under the concept of peer affective support had an impact on the participants' writing development in English according to the participants.

Camaraderie: As I mentioned in the previous subsection (4.3.2), the participants interpreted peer collaboration during the writing exercise as: (1) feeling comfortable with each other, (2) having informal discussion, and (3) humour when working together. I grouped these participants' interpretations of peer collaboration under the category of camaraderie under the concept of peer affective support. In the focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats, they were asked how these interpretations of peer collaboration had an impact of their writing development during the writing exercise. According to them, rapport helped reduce apprehension about writing in English and enabled them to overcome many of their writing-related problems. Also, humour helped them to tackle the obstacles to writing in English during the writing exercise. Table 4.16 below illustrates the frequency of references to each code and the number of participants represented in that code.

Table 4.16: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Camaraderie	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts	Number of participants* who commented
• Feeling comfortable reduces apprehension towards writing in English	19	3
• Feeling comfortable enables participants to reveal their writing-related problems	28	3
• Humour reduces apprehension towards writing in English	17	4

*Two groups of three were involved in this research

First, the code, feeling comfortable reduces apprehension towards writing in English, refers to three participants reporting that the sense of feeling comfortable that emerged when working together reduced fears in relation to writing in English.

Attila said, “I used to believe that I would never write in English because my thought was I’d make lots of mistakes if I wrote in English. In short, the idea of making lots of mistakes and getting negative feedback from my teacher used to put me off from writing in English. However, in this writing exercise, I noticed that Ali also had the same problem like me. Selma [group leader] helped us to overcome our fear of writing in English. Ali also showed his emotional support and I believe that after this writing exercise, I feel I’m able to write in English individually” (focus group discussion 4).

Deniz claimed that if she undertook the writing exercise with people that she did not know, she would feel anxious about working with them.

Deniz said, “Personally, I wouldn’t prefer to work with people that I’m not familiar with. If I was asked to work with people that I don’t know then I would feel anxious and would probably not write in English [...] Well the reason is I don’t want to be judged or ridiculed by the people if I produce something not satisfactory” (focus group discussion 3).

Second, the code, feeling comfortable enables participants to reveal their writing-related problems, refers to three participants’ views about sharing their writing-related difficulties and problems when writing in English to their group partners. They sought advice and help from their group leaders during the writing exercise.

Ali said, “Sometimes we don’t tell about our problems when we feel that we’re not comfortable with some people. However, I think we [Attila, Selma and himself] created a friendly environment in our Facebook group. At first, I didn’t want to be involved too much in the writing exercise, because I was thinking that Selma would do most of the work for us, but in time, I noticed that I should learn something out of this study, because I saw that Attila was having problems in writing in English like me and Selma was sharing her experiences and she was helping him to write on his own. Later, I decided to tell Selma and Attila that I needed some help with my writing” (online one- to-one chat).

Third, the code ‘humour’ reduces apprehension towards writing in English, refers to four of the participants recounting that the humour that emerged during the writing exercise helped them to reduce their apprehension with regards to writing in English. For instance, Deniz reported that whenever she wrote in English, she was afraid of making too many grammar mistakes. However, humour, which was described as funny stories used during the writing exercise by participants, help her overcome her fears.

Deniz described, “*Well I think our teacher of English expects us to write perfect writing in English and as her expectation is high, I feel afraid of making too many grammar mistakes, therefore I don’t like writing in English. However, in this writing exercise, when I wrote something funny in English, I saw my friends send laughing smiles and also said they liked it. I felt that they didn’t notice my grammar mistakes and they only focused on my funny writing. From that time on I used some humour in my writing to hide my grammar mistakes*” (online one-to-one chats).

In brief, based on the participants’ narratives, the category, ‘Camaraderie’ under the concept of peer affective support had a positive impact on participants’ writing development in English. In the focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats, participants related how the rapport that developed reduced apprehension about writing in English and enabled them to reveal their writing-related problems. Moreover, humour also helped them to overcome their fears.

4.3.4 Summary of the concept, ‘Peer Affective Support’

In this section, I presented the findings of the concept of peer affective support in addressing the two research questions of this current research. In the first subsection, I illustrated the codes and categories, which comprise the concept, ‘peer affective support’ with a table. In the second subsection, I explained the findings of peer leadership with regards to the first research question: “How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in online short story writing?”. The findings revealed that one of the key features of peer collaboration in the writing exercise that emerged was the concept of peer affective support. More specifically, as reported by the participants that peer affective support involved giving or receiving praise and saying or receiving motivational phrases. In addition to that the concept of peer affective support included rapport established among participants in groups which was reflected in participants

recounting that they felt comfortable with each other when undertaking the writing exercise, linked to their use of informal language in their group discussions and use of humour in their writing.

In the third subsection, “impacts of peer leadership as peer collaboration on participants’ writing development in English”, I presented the findings with respect to the second research question of this research which was: “What are EFL learners’ perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?”. The findings of this question indicated that peer affective support as one of the key features of peer collaboration had positive impacts on participants’ writing development in English during the writing activity. As reported by the participants when they received praise, they became motivated to write in English and when they received motivational phrases, they gained self-confidence to write in English. In addition, rapport reduced participants’ apprehension towards writing English and enabled them to reveal their writing-related problems to their group partners; humour used in the writing collaboration also helped reduce participants’ apprehension towards writing in English.

4.4 Peer Feedback

4.4.1 Introduction

This section presents the concept of peer feedback in relation to the research questions of the current research. I address the first research question by presenting the findings about how the two groups of three participants interpreted ‘peer feedback’ as peer collaboration in the online short story writing. I then address the second research question by describing the findings about the impact of ‘peer feedback’ on their writing development in English during the writing activity.

As shown in Table 4.17 below, first, a series of similar codes were grouped together into two categories: (1) group leaders’ feedback, and (2) collaborative feedback. Second, these two categories formed the concept of peer feedback. In the final stage, to present the codes and categories under the concept of peer feedback, I linked them to the research questions. The blue lines indicate the first research question and the red lines the second.

Table 4.17: Overview of codes and categories under the concept of peer feedback

Codes	Categories	Concept	Research Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving feedback from group leaders Giving feedback as a group leader 	Group leaders' feedback		How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in online short story writing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group leaders' feedback is instructional Group leaders' feedback increases motivation towards writing in English 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three group partners give feedback on a draft of writing All three group partners give feedback to the other group's final draft of writing 	Collaborative feedback	Peer Feedback	What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving feedback together increases self-confidence about writing in English Giving feedback together enables the participants to acquire self-correction techniques 			

Before moving to describing the codes and categories under the concept of peer feedback, I elucidate what I mean by ‘peer feedback’. According to most of the participants’ narratives, feedback was concerned with correcting grammar mistakes, misuse of vocabulary in a sentence and correcting spelling, punctuation or capitalisation mistakes in writing. For instance, Ali described his understanding of feedback as:

“What I understand from feedback is correcting mistakes in writing... it could be grammar, spelling or misuse of vocabulary in a sentence” (focus group discussion 3).

When asked what other feedback they received apart from correcting linguistic mistakes, some participants recounted that it could involve critiquing the content of writing. However, they said that they preferred not to give feedback about this because they felt linguistic accuracy was more important.

For instance, Selma explained, *“Well I could have commented on the content of Ali and Attila’s writing but I didn’t want to comment on that like a literary critic. For me, correct grammar, vocabulary and spelling are more important”* (focus group discussion 3).

According to some participants in focus group discussions, two types of peer feedback occurred during the writing exercise. The first type was “group leaders’ feedback”, which took place when the leaders corrected grammar mistakes, misuse of vocabulary as well as any spelling, punctuation and capitalisation errors in the group partners’ individual writing. Tables 4.18 and 4.19 below illustrate how the leaders of group A [Nila, Gonca & Deniz] and group B [Ali, Attila & Selma] gave feedback to their group partners’ individual writing. I created these tables from the participants’ discussion threads collected from their Facebook pages.

Table 4.18: An example of how the group leader in Group A gave feedback

Group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), session 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nila, the group leader comes up with ideas about what to write in a session. • Nila opens the floor for discussion. The group discusses and Gonca and Deniz make suggestions. • Nila accepts all suggestions and makes her final decision about what to write and allocates tasks to Gonca, Deniz and herself. • All three group partners write their writing tasks individually for 10-15 minutes. • Each participant posts their individual writing on their group's Facebook page. • Nila corrects Gonca and Deniz's writing. Nila's corrections were based on grammar, vocabulary and spelling mistakes. • Nila asks her group partners to repost their writing • Once Gonca and Deniz repost their writing, Nila combines each group partners' writing and posts it on their Facebook page. • Nila ends the session.

Table 4.19: An example of how the group leader in Group B gave feedback

Group B (Ali, Attila & Selma), session 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selma, the group leader, decides what to write in a session and asks her group partners' opinions. • Selma allocates individual writing tasks to Ali and Attila. • Selma helps them to write during their individual writing process. • Ali and Attila post their individual writing on their group's Facebook page. • Selma corrects Ali and Attila's writing. Selma's corrections were based on grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and capitalisation mistakes. • Selma also makes sure that Ali and Attila understand their mistakes in their writing. • Selma allows Ali and Attila to sign out. • Selma combines both Ali and Attila's writing and adds her own bit to it. • Selma signs out.

The second type of feedback was described by the participants was “collaborative feedback”. According to some, this form of feedback occurred during the eighth, ninth and the tenth sessions. In the focus group discussions, the participants identified two types of collaborative feedback that took place during the writing exercise. The first happened in the eighth and ninth sessions where the editing of drafts took place and the second took place in the tenth and final session where both groups gave feedback to each other's final draft.

As expressed by the participants, collaborative feedback was about correcting grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation and capitalisation mistakes together as a group. As reported by Nila, the group leader of group A, she initiated collaborative feedback, because she wanted her group partners to take responsibility for finding linguistic mistakes in the writing.

Nilā described it thus, *“In English lessons, we have ‘find the grammar mistakes in this paragraph’ type activities. I thought both Gonca and Deniz are used to doing these activities in English lessons and so why not do the same thing in this writing activity. I wanted them to take the responsibility of finding grammar, vocabulary and spelling mistakes in the writing. When we write we usually don’t notice mistakes, but when we read it, we can be good at spotting mistakes”* (focus group discussion 4).

Nilā also explained how her group undertook collaborative feedback, reporting, *“In the seventh session, we concluded our short story and in the eighth session I decided that Gonca and Deniz should take the responsibility for correcting grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation mistakes. Before the session, I spent some time combining all our previous drafts to see the complete story. I posted the whole story in our Facebook group and divided the story into three. I asked Deniz and Gonca to find grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and capitalisation mistakes in our short story. In the following session, we listed the mistakes we found in the correction and compared if we had all found the same mistakes or not”* (focus group discussion 4).

Selma, the leader of group B (Ali, Attila & Selma), confessed that she was inspired by Nilā’s feedback idea and noted how she had also subsequently applied it in her group.

Selma said, *“I heard from Nilā that she used a different way of correcting [linguistic] mistakes with her group partners in the eighth session. Even though my group didn’t complete the story, I decided to apply the same way of correcting the [linguistic] mistakes in our short story. I combined our drafts and posted our story without a conclusion. I asked Ali to correct the grammar and Attila to correct the vocabulary mistakes. I gave an easier task to myself,*

which was to correct the spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation mistakes in the short story” (focus group discussion, 4).

The above is an interesting example of a leader learning from a peer leader about correction techniques. In the following subsections (4.4.2 and 4.4.3), I explain the categories and codes under the concept of peer feedback in detail in relation to how the participants interpreted peer collaboration as peer feedback and then, how they described the impact of peer feedback.

4.4.2 Interpreting peer collaboration as ‘Peer Feedback’

This subsection addressed the first research question: “How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?” In order to address this, I analysed the focus group discussion transcripts and online discussion threads. Based on the analysis of these data sets, one of the key features of peer collaboration during the online short story writing that emerged was ‘peer feedback’. Table 4.20 below displays the codes and categories under the concept of peer feedback in relation to how participants interpreted peer leadership as peer collaboration during the online short story writing exercise.

Table 4.20: Overview of how the participants interpreted ‘peer feedback’ as peer collaboration

Codes	Categories	Concept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving feedback from group leaders • Giving feedback as a group leader 	Group leaders’ feedback	Peer Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three group partners give feedback on a draft of writing • All three group partners give feedback on the other group’s final draft of writing 	Collaborative feedback	

I describe the two categories: (1) group leaders' feedback, and (2) collaborative feedback under the concept of peer feedback in relation to how participants interpreted collaboration as such feedback during the online short story writing.

Group leaders' feedback refers to group leaders correcting the linguistic mistakes in their group partners' individual writings. More specifically, participants in the focus group discussions listed these linguistic mistakes as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and capitalisation. They described peer collaboration for this writing exercise in the focus group discussions as receiving feedback from group leaders and giving feedback as a group leader. Table 4.21 below provides overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants who commented on these.

Table 4.21: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Group leaders' feedback	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts	Number of participants* who commented
• Receiving feedback from group leaders	22	4
• Giving feedback as a group leader	18	2

*Two groups of three were involved in this current research

First, the code, receiving feedback from group leaders, refers to four group partners, mentioned that receiving linguistic corrections on their individual writing from group leaders was perceived by them as peer collaboration in this writing exercise. They reported that grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and capitalisation mistakes were highlighted by their leaders.

Attila noted *“I’m grateful to Selma [the group leader], because she corrected so many mistakes in my individual writing. For example, she corrected my sentence structures, tenses and vocabulary [...] She was correcting misspelled words in my writings and also I wasn’t capitalising the first letters of days and months when I was writing in English, because in Turkish we never capitalise them. Selma was warning me to use Tuesday or January. To be honest with you, Selma was very meticulous when it comes to corrections. She was even telling*

me that I should use a full stop at the end of a sentence [laughing] [...] I consider her corrections peer collaboration, because she was helping me and at the same time. I think she was practising her English knowledge (focus group discussion 3).

Ali added, *“If Selma [the group leader] didn’t correct my individual writing, I couldn’t complete this writing exercise with Selma and Attila. I consider this [peer feedback] collaboration, because Selma did not only help me, but also did help our group to proceed with our short story writing in English” (focus group discussion 3).*

Second, the code, giving feedback as a group leader, refers to views of leaders of both groups (group A and B) that correcting linguistic mistakes in their group partners’ individual writing was peer collaboration in the online short story writing exercise. Both group leaders (Selma and Nila) expressed that they had enjoyed correcting their group partners’ writing.

Nilä commented, *“Personally, the best part of this writing exercise was when I corrected my group partners’ individual writing, because I’m used to undertaking ‘find the mistakes’ type of exercises in English lessons [...] I feel that I collaborated with my group partners when I was correcting their mistakes in their writing. I think this way I was helping them improve their writing in English (focus group discussion 3).*

Selma said, *“In order to complete this writing exercise, we helped each other during the writing process. I helped Ali and Attila’s writing. [...] I mean I corrected their mistakes. By the end of writing exercise, I noticed that they had improved their writing skills so they not only produced a short story in English, but also learnt how to write in English (focus group discussion 4).*

To summarise, according to participants’ views, not only group partners, but also group leaders were content with group leader feedback. Regarding the group partners, their leaders’ feedback was considered collaboration for this writing exercise, which galvanised them to keep on writing in English. For the group leaders, giving feedback to their group partners was also perceived as collaboration, which helpful for both the participants’ quality of writing and the completion of the exercise. Attila commented that he thought his group leader also learnt from the exercise of feeding back to the

group.

Collaborative feedback refers to when the draft of the writing was edited by all three members of the group. This comprises the codes: (1) giving collaborative feedback on a draft of writing, and (2) giving collaborative feedback on the other group's writing. As explained earlier, collaborative feedback was described by the participants in focus group discussions as correcting the linguistic mistakes on their group's draft of writing and the other group's final drafts. Table 4.22 below provides an overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants who commented on these.

Table 4.22: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Collaborative Feedback	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts	Number of participants* who commented
All three group partners give feedback on a draft of writing	23	6
All three group partners give feedback to the other group's final draft of writing	20	6

*Two groups of three were involved in the current research

First, the code, all three group partners give feedback on a draft of writing, refers to all six participants commenting that this occurred when they corrected the linguistic mistakes in the complete draft of the short story together.

Gonca recounted, *“I definitely consider the moment when Nila, Deniz and me were trying to identify grammar, vocabulary, and spelling and punctuation mistakes peer collaboration”* (focus group discussion 3).

Attila commented, *“Earlier, Ali and me were depending on Selma's leading in the writing exercise, but when we started to edit and correct our short story all together, I think we both started to notice that if we worked all together, we could also produce something. However, at the beginning, we were unsure whether we could manage to do that without Selma's guidance. I think with my new experience of collaboration in sessions in 8 and 9, I redefine collaboration*

as working all together and supporting each other in the course of collaboration” (focus group discussion 4).

Second, the code, all three group partners give feedback to other group’s final draft of writing, refers to all six participants recounting that they identified and corrected linguistic mistakes in the other group’s short story in English. Nila, the leader of group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), reported that she arranged with Selma, the leader of group B (Ali, Attila & Selma), to hold an intergroup feedback session at the end of the writing exercise.

Nila described, *“I told Selma that as a group we’re quite curious about her group’s short story and therefore, I suggested to her that we read each other’s stories and comment on them by the end of the exercise. Selma liked the idea and we put on an intergroup session by the end of the writing exercise. [...] To me, the final session [10th session] was the real representation of peer collaboration in this writing exercise, because all six group partners were involved in the session equally. In each group, we shared the task of making comment on the other group’s short story. For example, I tried to find spelling and punctuation mistakes and gave my personal view on the content of other group’s short story”* (focus group discussion, 4).

Selma added, *“I think both group members were curious about each other’s short story. I’m glad that Nila came up with an idea of arranging an intergroup feedback session. I also allowed my group partners to give feedback to the other group’s short freely. I think they have learnt how to give feedback though my feedback to them [...] Well, I think collaboration is working collectively, but not everybody can feel themselves ready to work collectively, because they may not have enough experience or courage. It’s a sort of process you need to undergo to understand that you can really do something yourself.”* (focus group discussion 4).

Ali commented, *“At the beginning I was telling you that peer collaboration was Selma’s guidance. In those times, we needed that because I didn’t have the faintest idea of how to work together in a group. But now I definitely say that*

peer collaboration is working together without somebody's leading. [...] I enjoyed the last session when we were spotting and correcting mistakes in the other group's story. As Selma said, I learnt how to give feedback through her. Even though my English is not very good, I was using an online spell checker to see if they made any spelling mistakes and using grammar checker to see if there were any grammar mistakes in their story" (focus group discussion 4).

In sum, the following two codes: (1) all three group partners give feedback on a draft of writing, and (2) all three group partners give feedback to other group's final draft of writing formed the category, 'collaborative feedback'. The data show rich dialogue and evidence of the participants' understanding of the development of their learning and collaboration. In what follows, in light of the participants' perceptions, I describe how peer feedback had an impact on their writing development in English during the writing exercise.

4.4.3 Impact of 'Peer Feedback' on the participants' writing development in English according to the participants

In the previous subsection (4.4.2), the concept of peer feedback was described as one of the features of peer collaboration in online short story writing in relation to the first research question. In this subsection, I addressed 'peer feedback' with respect to the second research question: "What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?". In order to respond to this, I analysed the participants' focus group discussion transcripts and online one-to-one chat threads. As explained earlier, a series of similar codes were grouped into two categories: (1) peer feedback and (2) collaborative feedback. These two categories were grouped together and the concept, 'peer feedback' was elicited. The table below illustrates how peer feedback had an impact on the participants' writing development in English during the writing activity. Table 4.23 below shows the codes and categories under the concept peer feedback in relation how this, as seen as peer collaboration, had an impact on the participants' English writing development.

Table 4.23: Overview of how ‘peer feedback’ had an impact on the participants’ writing development in English

Codes	Categories	Concept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group leaders’ feedback is instructional • Group leaders’ feedback increases motivation towards writing in English 	Group leaders’ feedback	Peer Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving feedback all together increases self-confidence towards writing in English • Giving feedback all together enables learning from each other 	Collaborative feedback	

I describe these two categories: (1) group leaders’ feedback, and (2) collaborative feedback under the concept of peer feedback in relation to how peer feedback, which was described as one of the key features of peer collaboration by participants, had an impact on their writing development in English.

Group leaders’ feedback: As I explained in the previous subsection (4.4.2), participants expressed the view that they considered peer collaboration in online short story writing as (1) receiving feedback from group leaders, and (2) giving feedback as a group leader. When scrutinising how these collaboration features had an impact on their writing development in English, they recounted that the group leaders’ feedback was more instructional than their teacher’s and hence, increased their motivation towards writing in the language. Table 4.24 below illustrates the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants who commented on these.

Table 4.24: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Group leaders' feedback	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online one-to-one chats	Number of participants* who commented
Group leaders' feedback is instructional	17	3
Group leaders' feedback increases motivation towards writing in English	20	4

First, the code, group leaders' feedback is instructional, refers to three participants reporting that group leader feedback was helpful for their learning. In the focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats, they compared the feedback they had received from their group partners with that of their English teacher.

Deniz commented, *"I found Nila's feedback immediate and more detailed than our teacher of English. When our teacher gave a writing assignment, we handed her in our writing and we waited for a week to get a response from her. However, Nila's feedback was immediate and more detailed. Besides, it helped me notice my mistakes and develop my writing in English"* (focus group discussion 3).

In an online one-to-one chat, Attila questioned why their teacher of English did not organise group-writing exercises.

Attila reported, *"I wonder why our teacher didn't give us a group-writing exercise in English lessons earlier. We're asked to write individually [in English lessons]. The best thing I liked in this writing exercise [collaborative writing] was Selma's [the group leaders] corrections because her corrections facilitated my writing process in English. I could ask further explanations of my mistakes in writing. Unfortunately, our English teacher never gives such detailed explanations when we make mistakes both in writing and speaking. [...] I think, the thought of making mistakes usually stops me from producing sentences in English. However, in this writing exercise, I knew that Nila was going to read and correct my mistakes, so I wrote what came to my mind"*

without considering my mistakes in my writing” (online one-to-one chat).

Second, the code, group leaders’ feedback increases motivation towards writing in English, pertains to four participants recounting that when they received feedback from their group partners, they became motivated to write in English.

Ali commented, *“I am quite enjoying our cycle of writing. Whenever I finish my own individual writing task. I posted it on our group’s wall and I receive corrections from Selma [the group leaders]. In this way I feel more motivated towards writing in English than when writing individually.”* (focus group discussion,2).

To summarise, the two codes: (1) group leaders’ feedback is instructional, and (2) group leaders’ feedback increases motivation towards writing in English formed the category ‘group leaders’ feedback’.

Collaborative feedback: As I explained in the previous subsection (4.4.2), according to the participants, peer collaboration in online short story writing exercise was perceived as (1) giving collaborative feedback on a draft of writing, and (2) giving collaborative feedback on the other group’s writing. When exploring how these collaboration features had an impact on their writing development in English, some expressed the view that giving feedback together increased the self-confidence about writing in English. Moreover, they stated that this enabled learning from and with their group partners. Table 4.25 below illustrates the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants who commented on these.

Table 4.25: Overview of the frequency of recurring codes and the number of participants

Collaborative feedback	Number of comments from focus group discussion transcripts and online one-to-one chats	Number of participants who commented
Giving feedback together increases self-confidence towards writing in English	15	4

Giving feedback together enables the participants to gain self-correction techniques	19	4
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First, the code, giving feedback all together increases self-confidence towards writing in English, refers to four participants, who explained that this increased their motivation towards writing in English. Deniz described what she felt during the collaborative feedback sessions.

She said, “At the beginning of the writing exercise, I didn’t have any confidence in writing in English at all. However, by the end of this activity, I noticed that I have gained confidence... I must say that I owe my progress in writing in English to Nila [the group leader]. She guided us very well from the beginning to the end [...] Nila was correcting our individual writing when we were producing the short story. I was depending on her corrections, but at the same time I was observing what kind of corrections she was undertaking. At the end of the writing exercise, she asked us to find the mistakes in the complete draft of our short story. I noticed when I was correcting the writing that Nila prepared us regarding how to give feedback. In the previous sessions, she suggested using grammar and spelling check websites or mobile phone applications. I immediately got help from those places and also, I learnt the simple present tense during the writing exercise, because we wrote the story in the simple present. Therefore, I identified some mistakes related to the past tense in our story” (focus group discussion 4).

Gonca reported, “... I was pretty amazed that we worked together equally to correct our short story’s mistakes and did a little bit of editing and also corrected the other group’s short story. I felt more comfortable about my abilities and did not seek Nila’s guidance when undertaking these tasks” (focus group discussion 4).

Second, the code, giving feedback all together enables participants to gain self-correction techniques, refers to four participants commenting that collaborative feedback helped them identify and correct their own linguistic mistakes through learning about group partners' techniques for doing so.

Gonca commented, *"What I learnt from correcting both our short story and the other group's story is that I should take grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation into account when correcting my mistakes. I learnt how to correct them from my friends for example online websites are useful for grammar and spelling check. I should always write short sentences and use linking words when I want to combine two sentences"* (focus group discussion, 4).

In sum, the following two codes: (1) giving feedback together increases self-confidence towards writing in English, and (2) giving feedback together enables participants to gain self-correction techniques formed the category 'collaborative feedback'.

4.4.4 Summary of the concept, 'Peer Feedback'

In this section, I presented the findings of the concept of peer feedback in addressing the two research questions of this current research. In the first subsection, I illustrated the codes and categories which comprise the concept of peer feedback with a table. In the second subsection, I explained the findings of peer leadership with regards to the first research question: "How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing?". The findings revealed that one of the key features of peer collaboration in the writing exercise that emerged was the concept of peer feedback. More specifically, according to participants, peer feedback was described as correcting grammar mistakes, misuse of vocabulary in a sentence or correcting spelling, punctuation or capitalisation mistakes in writing. Two forms of peer feedback were characterised by the participants. The first form of peer feedback was group leaders' feedback and the second form of peer feedback was described as collaborative feedback. In the light of participants recounting, from group leaders' point of view, giving feedback to their group partners was considered as peer collaboration and from group partners' point of view, receiving feedback from group partners was considered as peer collaboration in online short story writing. In addition to that, participants considered peer collaboration in the writing activity when all three group partners gave feedback to their short story in editing sessions and when all three group partners gave feedback on

other group's final draft of short story.

In the third subsection, "impacts of peer feedback as peer collaboration on participants' writing development in English", I elaborated on the findings with respect to the second research question of this research which was: "What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?". The findings with regard to this question indicated that peer feedback as one of the key features of peer collaboration had positive impacts on participants' writing development in English. Based on participants' accounts, group leaders' feedback was considered instructional and increasing motivation towards writing in English. On the other hand, giving feedback all together was said to increase self-confidence towards writing in English and enabled participants to gain self-correction techniques from their peers. In what follows, I conclude the current chapter.

4.5 Summary and Conclusion

This section summarises the main findings of this current research. The findings presented in this chapter were based on the analyses of qualitative data sets, which involved focus group discussion transcripts, online one-to-one chat transcripts and online discussion threads gathered from the two groups of three participants. These data sets were analysed using the open coding analytical approach. As explained in Chapter 3, the reason for employing open coding was because no such study has been conducted in a Turkish public high school context previously. That is, as there was no particular framework to start from and hence, open coding helped me identify key concepts emerging from these data sets. Also, as this research was designed as an exploratory study, there were no predicted outcomes. By the end of the analysis of the above-mentioned data sets through the open coding analysis, three concepts: (1) peer leadership, (2) peer affective support, and (3) peer feedback were elicited by first grouping a series of similar codes together in categories and then combining these to form these key concepts. Having presented the codes and categories under these three concepts, I linked them to the research questions of this current research.

After the first session of the writing activity, the participants expected a teacher / facilitator to guide them during the writing exercise. However, when it was made clear that this would not be the case, they selected a group leader among them as they felt

unable to begin the task without one. According to them, they chose their group leaders based on their confidence and knowledge about how to chair a group discussion and the ability to make decisions about what to write in a session. The participants also chose their group leaders because they thought they had a better knowledge of English than them. It can be inferred from the findings that participants held rather traditional views of foreign language learning in the Turkish context, that is, they believed in teacher-centred learning and that, grammar predominantly is learnt through formulae, while vocabulary is learnt through translating Turkish into the target language (English). This reflects what is a culturally constructed model of the teacher, with the expectation and experience of a passive learner role in Turkish classrooms that initially might have restricted the participants' vision in terms of what they were being asked to do in a peer context. However, as they undertook their collaboration, the group leaders developed a more cooperative and informal style that the group participants said they found helpful for their learning.

It was understood from my observations of classes and from the participants' accounts that writing activities in English lessons were implemented through the product-oriented rather than the process-oriented approach, whereby the end of product of writing is considered to be more important than the process. Before the study, it was believed by the participants that the only appropriate reader and marker of their writing was their English teacher. As reported by them, they usually received corrections based on linguistic mistakes in their writing by their English teacher. It was observed during the study that the participants made ample use of technology, such as websites and mobile applications, in order to access linguistic information and/or check the linguistic correctness of their writing.

Based on the first research question: "How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?", the findings revealed that participants interpreted peer collaboration from two key perceptions: (1) the roles of group leaders in peer collaboration in this online short story writing activity and (2) the influence of peer affective factors on understanding of peer collaboration in this writing activity. Regarding the first aspect, according to some participants' accounts, peer collaboration in this writing exercise was when group leaders made decisions about what to write in a session and allocated individual writing or linguistic correction tasks to their group

partners. It was also about when group leaders explained to their group partners, vocabulary and grammar, how to make sentences in English with linking words as well as how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources. Group leaders praised their group partners when they achieved an individual writing task during the writing exercise and they used motivational phrases when they had difficulties in writing in English. The participants considered these actions as being peer collaboration. Their understanding of peer feedback was primarily about correcting linguistic mistakes. That is, when their group leaders corrected their individual writing pieces, they considered this as peer collaboration. In the sessions that involved editing their group's writing and giving feedback to that of the other group, the participants drew on the model provided by their group leaders. Specifically, the groups considered what feedback to give on the other group's creation amongst themselves prior to presenting it in the session. In sum, the concept of peer collaboration for these students did not initially involve equal task roles, contributions or shared leadership from the outside, but rather the election of a peer leader to support the collaboration, and 'take a lead'. However, the participants moved towards greater equality of contribution based on the developing friendship and confidence.

As to the second aspect of interpretation of peer collaboration in this writing exercise, this was the influence of peer affective factors on the understanding of it. As reported by the participants, peer collaboration was considered as: (1) receiving praise from group partners when they achieved an individual writing task during the writing exercise, (2) feeling comfortable with each other during the writing exercise, (3) informal discussion being used among the group and (4) humour being used in the individual writing tasks. Taken together, it is apparent that the peer affective factors lowered the participants' anxiety and fear, thus enabling them to collaborate in an open and relaxed way.

Based on the second research question: "What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?", the findings indicated that participants' interpretations of peer collaboration had an impact on their writing development in English from two angles. The first was in relation to the impact of the group leaders on the participants' writing development in English and the second, was the influence of peer affective support on it. Regarding the impacts

of the group leaders, as reported by the participants, they encouraged their group to perform linguistic searches either from online sources or books in response to their group partners' queries and questions. The group leaders felt that this kind of peer collaboration had a positive impact on English writing development in English in that this oriented the participants to identify ways to help themselves overcome any difficulties. According to group partners, the group leaders' decision-making facilitated the pre-writing stage of the collaborative writing process. However, others commented that there could have been more time allocated to group planning rather than leaving all the decision-making to them. The group leaders helped their group partners gain self-confidence in writing in English and the latter developed their learning from their interaction with the former. As contended by the participants, they considered group leaders' feedback as instructional and motivational towards writing in English. Moreover, the group partners developed ways of giving feedback to each other by mimicking their group leaders approach. The participants found collaborative feedback useful and according to them, collaborative feedback increased their self-confidence towards writing in English and enabled three-way learning from each other. As such, the students learnt from each other heuristically and exponentially as their confidence grew and as they became accustomed to the process.

Interestingly, the group leaders reported in online one-to-one sessions that they themselves did not feel any tangible benefit from their groups in terms of their own writing development in English. However, some group members commented that in their view the leaders did derive linguistic benefit from the teaching they undertook from the necessary online searches, they made and the explanations that had to provide for their groups.

Regarding the impact of peer affective support on the participants' writing development in English, they said receiving praise was motivational and the motivational phrases from their peers increased their self-confidence about it. The rapport established among group partners reduced apprehension towards writing in English and this enabled them to have the confidence to reveal their writing-related problems to their peers. Humour was used when writing in English in the form of experimentation and playing with the target language with the participants seemingly being unafraid of making mistakes. This kind of learning, rapport and collaboration was something they claimed they had never

experienced in their English lessons and they expressed satisfaction at their perceived success in this venture.

Ali commented, *“Above all, I had great fun during the writing exercise and noticed and learnt how the skill of writing could be developed and practised outside the classroom setting. I feel more confident of myself and my writing skills in English. I really hope that in the near future our teachers understand that students can learn from each other and give more group work exercises, not only in English lessons, but also on other courses”* (focus group discussion 4).

Nila commented, *“It was a useful experience for me to have participated in this study and worked with my close friends in the same group. Having been part of this study, I’ve expressed my decision about becoming a teacher of English in the future openly. I’ve learnt how to put my English knowledge into practice. After this study, I’m planning to create a weblog and write small short stories, poems, reflections of my life and my thoughts in English. I’ll share my writings in English to the world and people who know English can read and comment on my writings. That way, I could use my writing skills in English and improve it”* (focus group discussion 4).

Gonca stated, *“It was a wonderful experience for me. I feel myself lucky to have attended this study and met such a forward-thinking and kind-hearted teacher like you. Integrating a writing activity in an FB setting and making us learn from each other in groups was such a brilliant idea. I think in future young kids will learn in such a way”* (focus group discussion 4).

Whilst there is much exhortation in the writing about combining the affective and cognitive dimensions of learning and some limited research as referenced in chapter 2, there has been no research to the best of my knowledge about this with regard to High School EFL learners in Turkey, thus representing a gap in the field. This research has shown how affective and cognitive dimensions can work effectively in a mutually enhancing way as a result of peer collaboration by secondary school students and furthermore deriving from the students’ own needs and responses within that collaboration.

Next, in Chapter 5, I discuss this point and interpret the findings of this current research in relation to the relevant theoretical underpinnings and literature on peer collaboration in the context of EFL writing.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION of the FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a discussion of the study findings in order to gain a deeper understanding of EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration in online short story writing and these learners' perceptions about peer collaboration and on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the process. The discussion is based around three concepts that arose from the analysis of the data. To recap, in the previous chapter (Chapter 4) the following three concepts of peer collaboration: (1) peer leadership, (2) peer affective support, and (3) peer feedback emerged from the participants' feedback and these three concepts are considered in relation to the following two research questions.

1. How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
2. What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

The ideas presented in this chapter are discussed in light of the relevant theoretical underpinnings and previous studies on peer collaboration in the context of EFL writing. The findings of the current research were presented in detail in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I discuss and interpret these findings under four headings of a conceptual framework, as follows:

1. Types of peer collaboration in EFL writing
2. Peer leadership styles in peer collaboration
3. Peer affective factors in peer collaboration
4. Peer teaching and learning in peer collaboration

Such a conceptual framework according to Seibold (2002) links various concepts and serves to summarise and integrate the knowledge gained, provide explanations for casual linkages and, where appropriate, to generate hypotheses. In what follows, I first discuss types of peer collaboration then move to considering peer leadership styles within such collaboration and finally, I reflect on the peer affective factors involved.

5.2 Types of peer collaboration in EFL writing

In this section, I discuss the findings of this current study in relation to those of previous studies on peer collaboration in EFL writing. As discussed in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.2), I identified two studies of particular relevance (Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Li & Zhu, 2013), which showed evidence of types of peer collaboration in the context of EFL writing. My current study differed to these two studies in terms of methodology. Storch & Aldosari (2013) and Li & Zhu (2013) examined peer collaboration in EFL writing through the analyses of EFL learners' verbal/written pair/small group discussions and elicited peer interaction patterns among pairs/groups. In my study, I have investigated peer collaboration in EFL writing through EFL learners' analyses of interpretations from focus group discussions. Moreover, in the current study, online one-to-one chats and online discussion threads were also used to triangulate the focus group discussions.

The study of Storch & Aldosari's (2013) revealed three peer interaction patterns among pair partners during classroom-based collaborative writing, which were: (1) collectively contributing, (2) expert - novice and (3) dominant- passive. Li & Zhu's (2013) study elicited three peer interaction patterns among small group partners during wiki-based collaborative writing, these being: (1) collectively contributing, (2) authoritative - responsive, and (3) dominant - withdrawn. Both studies conducted their data analysis based on Storch's (2002) framework of peer interaction (collectively contributing, expert - novice, dominant - passive). In the light of these three peer interaction patterns and analyzing the findings of this current study, I identified the following four types of peer collaboration: (1) collectively contributing, (2) peer leadership, (3) peer affective factors, and (4) peer teaching and learning.

In my categorisation of types of peer collaboration, I identified the "collectively contributing" term in line with the study of Li & Zhu (2013), whereas the term "peer leadership" pertained to incorporating both Storch & Aldosari's (2013) peer interaction patterns regarding this, namely, expert and dominant peer leaders. In the study by Li & Zhu's (2013) the peer interaction patterns identified in regards to peer leadership were authoritative and dominant peer leaders. The terms of peer affective factors and peer teaching and learning, were identified in relation to the findings of my current study. In Table 5.1 below, I illustrate how these peer collaboration types have been presented in the studies of Storch & Aldosari (2013), Li & Zhu (2013) and my study.

In line with the findings of Li & Zhu's (2013) and Storch & Aldosari's (2013), the findings of the research in this study have highlighted the collectively contributing and peer leadership types of peer collaboration. In this study, at the beginning and in the middle of the writing activity, most of the participants described peer collaboration in terms of peer leadership type of peer collaboration. However, towards the end of the writing exercise the participants became more confident about the writing activity and writing in English, thus now perceiving peer collaboration more in terms of collectively contributing. For example, Gonca (group partner of group A) reported at the beginning of the writing exercise that without a group leader, she found maintaining peer collaboration challenging. However, towards the end of the writing exercise, she participated in editing and inter-group peer feedback sessions in a collective manner. Thus, it can be seen that Gonca's ideas about peer collaboration had changed over time. She commented in the fourth (final) focus group discussion that giving feedback together was real collaboration for her because she felt that everybody was working equally. The quotations below illustrate how her ideas about peer collaboration changed over time during the writing exercise.

Gonca recounted, "...*My understanding of collaboration involves a group leader and group partners. [...] What I believe is that without a group leader, I find it not very effective to maintain collaboration*" (focus group discussion 1).

Gonca reported, "... *I was pretty amazed that we worked all together equally to correct our short story's mistakes and did a little bit editing and also corrected the other group's short story. I felt more comfortable and did not seek Nila's guidance when undertaking these tasks*" (focus group discussion 4).

Regarding the peer leadership type of peer collaboration, it should be noted that contrary to Storch & Aldosari (2013) and Li & Zhu (2013), in my study, there was no evidence found of the dominant strand of peer collaboration. However, the peer affective factors type of peer collaboration that were not documented in the previous studies, was strongly identified in the participants' narratives. In my study, this occurred between the group leaders and group partner(s) or among the latter in instances, such as giving or receiving praise, saying or receiving motivational phrases, feeling comfortable with each other, informal discussions and use of humour in the participants' writing. I will elaborate on

peer affective factors of peer collaboration in sections 5.4 and 5.5 respectively.

Methodologically, the studies by Storch & Aldosari (2013) and Li & Zhu (2013) involved conducting collaborative writing activities in one session for each exercise and examining peer collaboration based on online or classroom peer interaction patterns in verbal/ written, pair/ group discussions about collaborative writing activities. By contrast, the current study lasted over seven weeks and the foci were, first, to examine EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration during an online short story writing activity and second, to investigate these learners' perceptions on the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development in English during online short story writing. This provided an opportunity to identify any changes in their interpretations and perceptions about the influence of peer collaboration during the writing exercise and indeed, it was found that these changed over time.

Table 5.1: Presentation of how peer collaboration types were exhibited in the previous studies and the current one

Types of Peer Collaboration	Storch & Aldosari (2013)	Li & Zhu (2013)	This current study
Collectively Contributing	Storch & Aldosari found that collectively contributing pairs make equal contributions to the group discussion and text construction throughout the writing activity.	Li & Zhu found that collectively contributing groups make equal contributions to the group discussion and text construction throughout the writing activity.	In my study, both groups group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) and group B (Ali, Attila& Selma) collectively contributed towards the end of the writing activity. Specifically, in the eighth and ninth sessions, both groups collectively undertook peer editing and feedback within their groups and in tenth session, both groups collectively provided peer feedback to each other.

<p style="text-align: center;">Peer Leadership</p>	<p>Storch & Aldosari (2013) identified two types of peer leader: (1) expert, and (2) dominant.</p> <p>As explained by them, one partner, called the “expert”, takes a more leading role in the pair activity, with the other partner being called the “novice”.</p> <p>Regarding the dominant type of peer leading, partner in a pair takes or is afforded control of the writing activity, whilst the other partner contributes little and there is little engagement regarding each other’s contributions.</p> <p>Storch & Aldossari describe this peer interaction as dominant - passive</p>	<p>Li & Zhu (2013) identified two types of peer leader: (1) authoritative, and (2) responsive.</p> <p>As explained by Li & Zhu, one member is “authoritative”, taking the most control over the small group writing exercise and the other two members are “responsive”, to the authoritative partner’s leading.</p> <p>Regarding the dominant type of peer leading, two members take control over the writing exercise and the third’s contribution is minimal and the member eventually withdraws from the writing exercise.</p> <p>Li & Zhu describe this peer interaction as dominant - withdrawn</p>	<p>In the second session, both group’s partners initiated the writing exercise by electing a peer leader in their groups. In group A, Nila, and in group B, Selma, became the group leader. Both group leaders led their groups from the second to seventh sessions.</p> <p>Peer leadership in this study is discussed in section 5.3.</p> <p>There was no sign of a dominant peer leader in this study.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Peer Affective Factors</p>	<p>Peer affective factors in peer collaboration were not documented in this study.</p>	<p>Peer affective factors in peer collaboration were not documented in this study.</p>	<p>In this study, peer affective factors were found during the text construction and peer feedback in terms of peer to group leader or among all three partners in the group. Peer affective factors in peer collaboration are discussed in section 5.4.</p>

Peer Teaching and Learning	Peer teaching and learning in peer collaboration was not documented in this study.	Peer teaching and learning in peer collaboration was not documented in this study.	<p>In this study, peer teaching and learning were found in text construction and peer feedback in terms of group leader to peer (s) in the group.</p> <p>Peer teaching and learning in peer collaboration is discussed in section 5.5.</p>
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To summarise, drawing on studies by Li & Zhu (2013) and Storch & Aldosari (2013), two types of peer collaboration were identified, which were the: (1) collectively contributing, and (2) peer leadership types of peer collaboration. In the current study, these types of peer collaboration were observed in addition to another form. The form that has not come to light in the previous studies is peer affective factors of peer collaboration in online short story writing discussed in later sections and of considerable significance in my study.

5.3 Peer leadership in peer collaboration

In this section, I discuss the findings of this present study in relation to peer leadership in peer collaboration under these five subheadings: (1) shifting roles of group leaders, (2) instructional role of group leaders, (3) shared leadership, (4) impacts of group leaders, (5) tensions concerning group leaders.

5.3.1 Shifting roles of group leaders

Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee's (2002) framework regarding group leadership styles has proved useful for this thesis as some of their leadership styles map on to those that emerged in my study. As explained in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.2), Goleman et al. identified six group leadership styles in a study of leaders in a consulting firm, these being: (1) commanding, (2) visionary, (3) affiliative, (4) democratic, (5) pace-setting, and (6) coaching. Before relating my findings to this framework, I consider why the participants said they felt the need to elect a group leader in their groups and roles of these leaders during online short story writing exercise. The participants stated their

reasons for selecting a group leader for the groups were: (1) the need to have a group partner to replace what they felt as the missing teacher/facilitator role, (2) the desire to have a group partner who was more confident and knowledgeable about undertaking a writing exercise and (3) the need to have a group partner who, it was considered, had a better knowledge of English. They had a clear conception of the role of a leader and saw the election of a leader as a necessary step in their collaborative work. During the writing exercise, the group leaders had important roles that changed in emphasis depending on the phase and stage of writing. The participants considered the issues below as peer collaboration during the writing exercise phases.

Planning stage of writing

- Group leaders made decisions about what to do at the beginning of each session (between 3rd and 7th sessions).
- Group leaders allocated individual writing tasks to their group partners at the beginning of each session (between 3rd and 7th sessions).

Composing stage of writing

- Group leaders provided linguistic assistance, such as explaining vocabulary and grammar, showing how to make a sentence in English with linking words and checking linguistic mistakes through a website or mobile application.
- Group leaders provided affective support to their group partners. For example, they praised (e.g. well done!, excellent!, good work!) their group partners when they managed to achieve a task during the writing exercise and used motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you) when they faced difficulties with writing in English.
- Group leaders gave feedback to their group partners after the production of each individual writing task.

Editing & peer feedback stage of writing

- As explained in section 5.2, in Table 5.1, in the eighth, ninth and tenth sessions of the writing exercise, both groups' members contributed to the writing activity collectively.

Regarding the framework of Goleman et al. (2002) in relation to leadership styles, the notions of commanding, affiliative, coaching and democratic leadership styles fit with the outcomes of my study. Each group's leader exhibited different peer leadership styles during the writing activity. For example, Selma, group B's leader, demanded that her group partners comply with her decisions in the planning stage of the writing exercise. In line with Goleman's framework of leadership styles, it could be said that Selma's peer leadership style at this time I would categorize as of the commanding style. Nila, group A's leader, however, showed a more democratic peer leadership style. For example, at the beginning of each session, she opened up the floor for discussion, listened to her group partners' opinions and then made decisions about what to do in the session during the planning stage of writing.

In the composing stage of writing, both group leaders were rather more commanding in terms of allocation of individual writing tasks. However, at the same time, they provided linguistic assistance and peer feedback, which can be viewed as a coaching peer leadership style, according to Goleman et al.'s (2002) framework as well as providing peer affective support, which is in keeping with an affiliative peer leadership style (*ibid.*). During the editing and peer feedback stages of writing, both leaders led their group in a more "democratic" way (*ibid.*) such that all group partners worked collectively. In Tables 5.2 and 5.3, I provide an overview of the evolution of the group leader leadership styles during the online short story writing activity in accordance with Goleman et al.'s framework. Table 5.2 refers to group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), whilst Table 5.3 pertains to group B (Ali, Attila & Selma).

Table 5.2: Group A: Change in Nila's peer leadership style during the online short story writing activity

Group A	Phase of writing	Peer leadership style	Definitions
Group leader: Nila Group partners: (Nila, Gonca & Deniz)	Planning	Democratic	Nila, the group leader usually discussed with her other group partners before she made decisions about what to do in the session.
	Composing	Commanding	In terms of allocating individual writing tasks, Nila was commanding. She usually allocated these tasks to her group partners without asking their opinions.
		Coaching	Nila provided linguistic assistance during the composing stage of the writing and provided peer feedback after her group partners had posted their individual writing tasks.
		Affiliative	Nila supported her group partners with praise and motivational words
	Editing & peer feedback	Democratic	Nila enabled her group partners to edit and check the linguistic mistakes in the final draft of their short story. Including Nila, all group partners worked collectively.

Table 5.3: Group B: Change in Selma's peer leadership style during the online short story writing

Group B	Phase of writing	Peer leadership style	Definition
Group Leaders: Selma Group partners: (Ali, Atilla & Selma)	Planning	Commanding	Selma, the group leader never discussed with her group partners before she made decisions about what to do in the session.
	Composing	Commanding	In terms of allocating individual writing tasks, Selma tended towards the commanding style. She usually allocated writing tasks to her group partners without asking their opinions.
		Coaching	Selma provided linguistic assistance during the composing stage of writing and provided peer feedback after her group partners had posted their individual writing tasks.
		Affiliative	Selma supported her group partners with praise and motivational words.
	Editing & peer feedback	Democratic	Selma enabled her group partners to edit and check their linguistic mistakes in the final draft of their short story. Including Selma, all group partners worked collectively.

As can be deduced from Tables 5.2 and 5.3 above, at the beginning of the writing exercise the participants accepted a traditional interpretation of leadership for their group leader. That is, in the planning stage, those in both groups expected that their group leaders would orchestrate the group discussions, make decisions about what to do during a session and allocate individual writing tasks to their group partners. However, when conducting these activities, the leader of group A, Nila, was more democratic and usually discussed issues with her group partners before making decisions. Selma, however, leader of group B, was more a commanding sort in that she

made decisions on behalf of the group and expected her group partners to comply with her although she did sometimes allow them to share their opinions about what she had decided. During the composing stage of writing, the participants in both groups expected that their group leaders would provide linguistic assistance when needed as well as peer feedback and affective support. As to the editing and peer feedback sessions, the more “commanding” style of peer leadership was gradually reduced at this point, the group leaders provided the foundation to work collectively for delivering peer feedback in each group or between them.

As discussed in section 5.2 and in Table 5.1, Storch & Aldosari (2013) identified two group leadership styles: (1) expert, and (2) dominant, while Li & Zhu (2013) termed the two leadership styles they found: (1) authoritative and (2) dominant. The distinction between expert and dominant group leadership styles is according to Storch & Aldosari, when the expert member in a pair/group seeks to involve the novice in the interaction and provides assistance that will help the latter’s learning from the interaction, whereas the authoritative member in a pair / group promotes collective work and enables group partners to help each other when undertaking the collaborative writing task. Regarding a dominant group leadership style, in both studies (Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Li & Zhu, 2013), the dominant member in a pair/group took control over the writing exercise, and other group member(s)’s contribution was minimal, with this/these group partner(s) sometimes even withdrawing completely. In line with Storch & Aldosari (2013) and Li & Zhu (2013) in the present study both expert and authoritative group leadership styles were found. At the beginning of the collaborative writing exercise in my study, the participants sought scaffolding from the group leaders and for this reason the group leaders assumed the role of expert. However, towards the end of the writing exercise, the group partners gained more confidence about writing in English and also became more aware of what needed to be done. Consequently, group leaders’ roles were changed and they became authoritative group leaders, which meant they promoted collective group work using their authority so as to enable their group partners to help each other during the collaborative writing exercise.

5.3.2 Instructional role of group leaders

As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.6.2, Base & Base's (2000) study of the behaviors of instructional group leaders revealed that making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling effective instruction, soliciting opinions and supporting collaboration were hallmarks of instructional leadership. Whitaker (1997) described group leaders, in his case school principals, as resource providers, instructional providers, good communicators and able to create visible presence. Even though these two studies were conducted among school leaders and my study focused on teenage high school EFL learners, as I have emphasized, in order to engage in their task in groups of three, the group members found it necessary to elect a leader. An analysis of the students' enacting of the leadership role reflected many of the behaviors of instructional group leadership in those studies and the findings of my study have shown a clear development of a mode of instructional group leadership.

In this study, group leaders for each group of participants provided linguistic assistance during the composing stage of writing such as explaining a grammar topic, explaining how to use a vocabulary item in English in a sentence, showing how to make a sentence in English with linking words, and showing how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources. They also provided peer feedback after their group partners had posted their individual writing tasks. Group leaders also made decisions about what to do at the beginning of each session and allocated individual writing tasks to their group partners during the production of their short story, making suggestions for reference resources and always being available. The instructional role was one they were aware of and took very seriously.

The findings about group partners explicitly developing their learning from group leaders lends support to the findings of Li & Zhu (2013), Storch & Aldosari (2013), and Lan, Sung & Chang (2007). Similar to these studies, in this current study the group leaders provided "scaffolding" (Vygotsky, 1978) in a variety of ways when undertaking the collaborative writing exercise. However, as mentioned earlier, in the editing and peer feedback sessions, the group leaders' instructional lead became more collaborative as the partners began to feel more self-confident and able to contribute to group learning and when undertaking the writing activity and writing in English individually, thus enabling the groups to act more collectively when undertaking these sessions. This type

of scaffolding has been called “collective scaffolding” by Donato (1988) and Chao & Lo (2011).

5.3.3 Shared leadership

The group peer leaders provided an important role model for the group participants. Their instinctive encouragement and support enabled an important shift to take place, effectively ‘from a hierarchical control to peer control’ as Harris (2003:73) writes. Such a shift of control towards collaborative instruction and learning was found to be important in this study. The data from my study showed that at the beginning and in the middle of the writing activity, the participants were dependent on their group leaders but towards the end of the writing activity, leadership has shifted from merely group leaders’ leadership to shared leadership. The data from one of the participants’, Attila, recounting shared his view on the changing of the notion of collaboration from group leader’s leading to working together. This clearly shows his initial insecurity and lack of confidence and the gradual understanding that collaboration was inclusive of them all:

“Earlier, Ali and me were depending on Selma’s leading in the writing exercise, but when we started to edit and correct our short story all together, I think we both started to notice that if we worked all together, we could also produce something. However, at the beginning, we were unsure whether we could manage to do that without Selma’s guidance. I think with my new experience of collaboration in sessions in 8 and 9, I redefine collaboration as working all together and supporting each other in the course of collaboration” (focus group discussion, 4).

In the next example, group B’s (Ali, Attila & Selma) group leader, Selma commented on the group’s transformation into a collaborative working group with the opportunity to share leadership:

“[...] Well, I think collaboration is working collectively, but not everyone can feel themselves ready to work collectively, because they may not have enough experience or courage. It’s a sort of process you need to undergo to understand that you can really do something yourself” (focus group discussion 4).

Nila, group A's (Nila, Gonca & Deniz) group leader explained that the final session (10th session) of the writing activity which was about the intergroup feedback session enabled all six participants to contribute to the session equally and as a result:

“[...] To me, the final session [10th session] was the real representation of peer collaboration in this writing exercise, because all group partners were involved in the session equally. In each group, we shared the task of making comments on the other group's short story [...] (focus group discussion 4).

The development of the group's style of working is visible in these comments that reflect not only evidence of the process of a move towards 'real' peer collaboration but also of a shared leadership style. Crucially, this change was both experienced and described by the group participants and also articulated very clearly by the group leaders who were very much aware of their perceptions as to the impact of their peer leadership.

5.3.4 Impacts of group leaders

The writing outcomes have not been the focus of this study but rather the perceptions by the participants of the impact of the group leaders on their writing development. Regarding the participants' perceptions of the impacts of peer leadership styles (which was interpreted as peer collaboration by the participants) on the participants' writing development in English during the online short story writing in the current research, group partners reported that:

- Group leaders' decision-making facilitated the pre-writing stage of the collaborative writing process;
- Group partners developed their learning from the group leaders;
- Group partners gained self-confidence in writing in English with the guidance of the group leaders;
- Group leaders' feedback was instructional;
- Group leaders' feedback increased motivation towards writing in English.

With regard to the ‘group leaders’ decision-making facilitating the pre-writing stage of the collaborative writing process’, according to Deniz for example, her group leader, Nila, generated ideas and made decisions before they wrote in each session which helped her and the group to undertake the writing activity:

“If I had to do this [writing] exercise myself, I could never start it. I’m not good at writing in English at all. It takes me ages to generate ideas and put them in writing. When Nila generated ideas and made decisions about what and how we should write in each session helped me and the group a lot. I think this was one of the best things that helped my writing development in English so far. I wish I could do group writing with Nila in all writing exercises” (focus group discussion 2).

By way of evidence regarding ‘group partners developed learning from their group leaders’, Atilla’s comment is illustrative because he details in the below quotation what sort of learning he developed from his group leader, Selma’s tips. Her tips included, for example giving formulas for sentence construction in English (subject+verb+object), he felt had helped him improve his writing in English:

“I believe that Selma is a very good teacher for us [Atilla himself and Ali], because she noticed that Ali and I were having problems when writing in English individually. Therefore, she gave us some tips about how to write better individually. [...] Selma’s tips for writing in English improved my writing in English. At the moment, I feel more confident about writing in English” (focus group discussion 4).

Regarding ‘group partners gained self-confidence in writing in English with the guidance of the group leaders’, evidence from Deniz showed that when writing individually, her queries about grammar and vocabulary were dealt with in a comprehensible way by her group leader, Nila and had enabled her to gain self-confidence in writing in English:

“One of my main difficulties in writing in English is that I have limited vocabulary and lack of grammar knowledge. Whenever I write in English myself, I quit in the middle because of this. However, in this writing exercise,

Nila helped me most of the time when I had queries about grammar and vocabulary. I wanted to write more, especially towards the end, because I gained self-confidence in writing in English” (online one-to-one chat).

As to the point about group leaders’ feedback being instructional, Deniz commented that she has received immediate and detailed feedback from her group leader, Nila and this has helped her to become aware her linguistic mistakes in writing and develop her writing in English:

“I found Nila’s feedback immediate and more detailed than our teacher of English. When our teacher gave a writing assignment, we handed her in our writing and we waited for a week to get a response from her. However, Nila’s feedback was immediate and more detailed. Besides, it helped me notice my mistakes and develop my writing in English” (focus group discussion, 3).

The impact finding regarding ‘group leaders’ feedback increases motivation towards writing English’ pertains to when group partners received feedback from their group leaders, that lead them to become motivated to writing in English. For example, Ali commented,

“I am quite enjoying our cycle of writing. When I finish my own individual writing task. I posted on our group’s wall and I receive corrections from Selma [the group leader]. In this way, I feel more motivated towards writing in English than writing individually” (focus group discussion,2).

The impacts as highlighted by the participants it would seem were considerable and also interlinked and developmental in that the support, guidance and leadership of the group leaders were not only of direct instructional use but also gave the group participants the self-confidence to begin to move their learning on for themselves.

5.3.5 Dissatisfaction with the group leaders

It may appear from the previous sections that the peer leadership was unproblematic. This was not the case. In focus group discussion, most of the participants of this study reported that the group leaders' decision-making facilitated the pre-writing stage of the collaborative writing process. However, when this was discussed individually with the participants, some of them expressed some dissatisfaction about the group leaders' roles during the pre-writing stage. For example, regarding these conflicting perceptions, Attila, a member of group B, commented in the second focus group discussion that even though he did not like his group leader's (Selma) decisions in some sessions, he had approved of most of his group leader's decisions for the sake of maintaining the group work and keeping up the pace of working.

“Even though in some sessions, I didn't like Selma's decisions, I still approved of most of her decisions, because if we had started discussing how we should write, we could have spent hours in discussions and ended up writing nothing”
(Attila: focus group discussion 2).

However, when discussing this individually with Attila, he stated that he did not like most of Selma's decisions, because he found her leadership somewhat domineering, which sometimes left him feeling demotivated towards writing in English.

“To be honest with you, I don't like most of Selma's decisions. She sometimes acts as if she knows everything. This week [sixth session], she asked me to describe how Sally met a guy and fell in love with him. Well, she wanted me to write a girly soap opera but I didn't want to do that. That's why I made Sally fall in love with Bob and then I made him die in a car accident at the end. Selma got angry at me because of this. I had a little argument with her. I think she should allow group planning otherwise these small things demotivate me in my writing” (Attila: online one-to-one chat)

Concerning the evaluation by the group leaders themselves in the focus group discussions, they thought that the above-mentioned dimensions of peer collaboration had positive impacts on their group's learning and writing development in English. However, when this matter was discussed individually, they expressed a measure of

dissatisfaction in not benefiting from interactions with their group partners in terms of developing their own linguistic knowledge and thus, having to resort to linguistic searches of online sources or books. This suggests that leaders themselves need to be set challenges aimed at improving their own level of learning and need appropriate scaffolding to do so. This could perhaps have been done between the group leaders and is a proposal I will make in the conclusion.

To summarise this section, drawing on the framework of Goleman et al. (2002) about peer leadership styles, I have discussed the findings from my study concerning these styles and associated issues. The studies of Li & Zhu (2013) and Storch & Aldosari (2013) provided a more detailed lens with which to interpret peer leadership styles in collaborative writing in an EFL context. A key finding was that scaffolding strategies comprised more than linguistic scaffolding and a much broader instructional frame, and they also covered a range of affective strategies geared towards motivating the participants. In the following section, I discuss peer affective factors in peer collaboration.

5.4 Peer affective factors in peer collaboration

In this section, I discuss the findings of this current study in relation to peer affective factors in peer collaboration. In this research, the participants considered that peer affective factors were:

- Giving praise (e.g. well done! excellent! good work!) as group leaders;
- Receiving praise (e.g. well done! excellent! good work!) from group leaders;
- Giving motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you) as group leaders or a group partner;
- Receiving motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you) from group leaders or from a group partner(s);
- Feeling comfortable with each other when undertaking the writing exercise;
- Informal language use in group discussions including terms of endearment (such as darling, hone, and love) and the use of text speak and emoticons;
- Use of humour when undertaking individual writing tasks.

As explained in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.2), one of the key findings of Lee's (2010) study that was concerned with peer feedback in EFL writing indicated that many participants did not feel confident about praising their peers due to lack of experience and knowledge about how to give peer feedback. In contrast to what Lee found in her study, in my study, the group leaders gave frequent praise to their group partners. As explained by the group leaders, one of the main reasons why they used praise was to increase peer collaboration during the online short story writing exercises. According to the participants of this study who received praise from group leaders, they thought that this was motivational for them in relation to writing in English.

Nguyen's (2013) study, as outlined in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.2), which examined peer collaboration in an EFL speaking task among six pairs, revealed that some motivational phrases (e.g. "don't worry!", "everything will be alright after all") used by the pair partners enabled them to support each other in sustaining task engagement, building a rapport, increasing self-confidence and feeling a sense of safety when undertaking the activity. In line with the findings of Nguyen, the participants in my study claimed that such motivational phrases increased their self-confidence about writing in English.

In this study, the participants also emphasized that they felt comfortable with each other when undertaking the writing exercise. The main reason why they said they felt this way was attributed to the developing friendships among the group partners. In the study of Kutnick, Blatchford & Baines (2005) discussed in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.2), friendship among peers in a group work was found to be a foundation for building trust between group partners, the ability to communicate effectively and the capacity to resolve problems jointly with peers. Dale's (1994) study, as outlined in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.2), albeit in the rather different context of L1 ninth-grade students, was concerned with the investigation of collaborative writing interactions. One of the key findings was that trust and respect among group partners in collaborative writing enabled students to feel comfortable with each other when discussing the emerging text. In the current study, both groups built a comfortable and supportive environment where group partners felt relaxed with each other when undertaking their online short story writing exercise in groups. Thus, in line with the findings of Dale, the outcomes of my study lend weight to the importance of the concept of peers feeling comfortable with

each other during a collaborative writing process when a sense of friendship is present.

In this study, as recounted by the participants, becoming comfortable with each other when undertaking the writing exercise enabled them to reduce the apprehension and the anxiety they felt initially towards writing in English as well as being able to share their writing-related problems. Studies by Kurt & Atay's (2007) and Yastibas & Yastibas (2015) on 'writing anxiety' in the field of EFL context have mostly focused on the use of peer feedback. As presented in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.2), its usage was found to have a positive impact on EFL learners' anxiety about writing in English. In the current study, it was found that anxiety was greatly reduced as the collaborative exercise got underway. The participants began to feel increasingly comfortable with each other after receiving motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you) and praise (e.g. well done! excellent! good work!) from their team leaders. In addition, informal language, including terms of endearment (e.g. darling, honey and love) and 'text speak' with emoticons along with humour from their peers enabled them to work in a relaxed way when undertaking their individual writing. As explained by the participants, praise motivated them to continue their writing in English especially the giving and receiving of motivational phrases when one of their group partners had difficulties in pursuing a writing task. The findings from this study about reducing anxiety, feeling comfortable and using humour build on the findings of Kurt & Atay (2007) and Yastibas & Yastibas (2015).

Based on the participants' recounting, informal discussions in an online setting, Facebook enabled the participants to feel comfortable with each other when undertaking the writing exercise, and use informal language in group discussions (such as they would not normally use out of the Facebook setting) including terms of endearment (such as darling, hone, and love) and the use of texting language and emoticons, and use humour when undertaking individual writing tasks. This is I suggest because Facebook is an environment that they use regularly for their social interaction and that affords the support of a culture of emotional support and care and a feeling of being part of a community, supporting the findings of Anderson & Simpson (2004) and other studies cited in Chapter 2. The dimensions of peer collaboration, peer leadership and the associated affective factors lead me to pull together the various strands that have created a powerful peer teaching and peer learning environment in this study where the small group unit has been central.

5.5. Peer teaching and learning

The group participants in this study managed to create a richly collaborative peer teaching and learning culture such as would be welcomed by many teachers. Whilst guided by me initially in terms of group and task structure, timing and topics, aside from this, the participants developed ways to peer teach and peer learn completely on their own. It is insightful to look at strategies used by the group leaders to peer teach drawing on sample data to illustrate these strategies. First, I cite an example of a group leader helping a group member, Ali, how to use a word in context by providing an example:

“I knew [the word] “excited” but I didn’t know how to use this [word] in a sentence... I asked Selma to help me explain how to use ‘exciting’ in a sentence. She was very helpful to me. I think that was peer collaboration for me” (focus group discussion 2).

Another example comes from Deniz who although she had checked a word she was looking for herself, was not sure if she had used the word correctly. She therefore sought assistance from her group leader who she considered to be more knowledgeable. Her group leader noticing the problem assisted her with example sentences with the correct word, providing scaffolded support to move Deniz towards developing her own understanding:

“When we were editing our short story, Nila [the group leader] spotted my mistake about the phrase ‘uncared house’. I checked this word in an online dictionary. The word, ‘bakimsiz’ means “uncared” in English. I thought we could use uncared house when a house is not clean or tidy. However, Nila told me that I shouldn’t use uncared house and explained to me with example sentences... She said I should use ‘untidy or messy house’... Well I think when Nila explains the meaning of this word with examples to me this is collaboration” (focus group discussion 3).

The episode that follows taken from group B's (Ali, Attila & Selma) third session in FB group discussion supports a mode of peer teaching based on question and answer where Selma skillfully reinforces the correct response:

Ali: *Can one of you tell me how to say Sally bu resimde hızlı koşuyor [Sally is running fast in this picture] in English?*

Attila: *Which tense are you going to use?*

Ali: *I think the continuous*

Selma: *Well, in the continuous tense, you first use the subject and then am/is/are and then a verb with -ing.*

Ali: *Ok thanks so "This picture Sally is running fast." Is this correct?*

Selma: *Well done! Ali 😊*

Directing group members to online resources to seek solutions for themselves was another strategy used by the leaders. In the following quotation, Ali exemplifies how group partners were directed by their leaders towards online sources and relevant ICT tools and shown how to use these sources by their group leaders / partners to facilitate their writing process in English:

"Selma noticed that I have spelling problems and therefore she assisted me. As I undertook the writing exercise through my phone, she suggested me to use an app [mobile application] called 'Spell checker'. I downloaded this app in my phone and after that Selma explained me how to use it [...] I consider this collaboration in this writing exercise, because when Selma helped my spelling problem she was not only helping me, but also helping us as a group to write our short story better (focus group discussion 1).

This evidence chimes with Damon & Phelps's (1989) arguments on peer teaching which is about one learner acting as an expert and the other one as a novice and indeed with the work of Vygotsky (1978) with reference to mutual scaffolding (as in the last sentence of this quotation) and the offering of assistance to each other. This type of feedback also resonates with the findings of Hartman (2002) who, from his study of EFL learners defined scaffolding in the practical shape of cues, hints, starting off ideas, prompts and models as well as direct instruction such as used by the two group leaders

in this study. Ali illustrates how the activity and the leader scaffolding enabled the participants to become more independent and active in seeking out resources in line with the findings of Altschuler (2001).

The following evidence from Deniz and Attila showed how their group leaders' responses to their queries about vocabulary and grammar enabled them as participants to gain self-confidence and subsequently have less anxiety about writing in English.

Deniz stated, *"One of my main difficulties in writing in English is that I have limited vocabulary and lack of grammar knowledge. Whenever I write in English myself, I quit in the middle because of this. However, in this writing exercise, Nila helped me most of the time when I have queries about grammar and vocabulary. I wanted to write more, especially towards the end, because I gained self-confidence in writing in English"* (online one-to-one chat).

Attila commented, *"I think what stops me from writing in English when writing individually is usually the questions I ask myself. These questions are mostly about grammar and vocabulary. I can't answer these questions and therefore, I can't produce sentences in English... However, in this writing exercise there is somebody helping us to answer our questions and guide us how to write in English"* (focus group discussion 2).

The group leaders were very much aware of their role in enabling their peers to progress their writing and to develop their self-confidence to do so. Selma and Nila, using an interesting metaphor of being the 'backbone' comment thus, for example:

"I helped Ali and Attila as much as I could during the writing exercise. I showed them how to make a sentence in English or explained a grammar topic or the meaning of vocabulary and also when they lost their motivation towards writing in English, I was the one who motivated them. I had many responsibilities during this writing exercise. I think as a group leader I feel that I'm the backbone of peer collaboration in this writing activity" (Selma, focus group discussion 4).

“[...] As the leader of my group, I was also the backbone of the peer collaboration in this writing exercise. After having said that, I didn’t want to mean that I did all the work, but they [Gonca and Deniz] didn’t. Everybody had different roles in this writing exercise, but we worked together despite difficulties to produce our short story in English” (Nila, focus group discussion 4).

In these comments, the leaders show their sense of responsibility towards their peers and an acute awareness of the need to engage and motivate their peers by enabling a contribution to the collaboration and to learn together. As such, the peer teaching in this context reflect the findings (see section 2.6.1) of Boud, Cohen and Sampson (2001) especially their point about peer teaching providing learners with opportunities to teach each other and to construct knowledge together.

5.6 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, I first explored types of peer collaboration by drawing on previous studies in EFL writing, subsequently identifying two types, namely, (1) collectively contributing, (2) peer leadership. In my study, collectively contributing and peer leadership types of peer collaboration in EFL writing were the ones in evidence, according to the participants’ comments. Furthermore, the peer affective factors aspect of peer collaboration, which has not been fully documented in the extant research, was strongly identified in the participants’ narratives from this study. To re-cap, I have characterised three types of peer collaboration from the findings of this study, these being: (1) collectively contributing, (2) peer leadership, and (3) peer affective factors.

Regarding the collectively contributing type of peer collaboration, in this study, at the beginning and in the middle of the writing exercise the participants were mostly dependent on their group leaders’ leadership and guidance. However, towards the end of the exercise, they started to work more collectively and dependence on the group leaders started to decrease. In relation to the peer leadership type of collaboration among peers, I considered this from using the framework by Goleman et al. (2002) on group leadership styles although it is important to state that the peer leadership in this study has been evidenced beyond the static boundaries of their framework. In my study, an initial reliance on a traditional view of leadership fairly quickly evolved quite naturally into a

more democratic and participatory style of leadership. This was because the benefits of this style of peer leadership soon became apparent to both the leaders and the other group participants for promoting a collaborative approach to improving writing skills. The group leaders provided instructional leadership in providing linguistic assistance to their group partners such as explaining vocabulary and grammar, showing how to make a sentence in English with linking words and helping them check linguistic mistakes through websites or mobile applications. Moreover, the group leaders' feedback was reported by the participants as instructional and motivational in this exercise. This led to group participants acquiring learning and gaining self-confidence in writing in English, sometimes being able to share leadership in taking the initiative in the groups.

I did however identify an issue regarding the needs of the group leaders, who felt that they lacked a stimulus to take their own work to another level. There was also the issue of dissatisfaction, raised by one group participant, regarding the leadership style in his group. However, he with considerable maturity chose to accept the leader's decisions so as to enable the group to continue to work effectively.

Finally, the data showed considerable evidence of the peer affective factors type of peer collaboration, engendered by the rich teaching and learning culture they had created for themselves. As reported by the participants, the peer affective factors comprised: giving / receiving praise, giving/ receiving motivational phrases, feeling comfortable with each other when undertaking the writing exercise, informal language use in group discussion and the use of humour when undertaking individual writing tasks. According to their comments, feeling comfortable with each other during the writing activity had a positive impact on their writing development, because it reduced apprehension about writing in English and made it easier for them to reveal their writing-related problems to their group partners. In addition, receiving praise (e.g. well done! excellent! good work!) from their group partners motivated them to write in English and motivational phrases (e.g. 'you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you as well as the use of encouraging emoticons) as well as the use of terms of endearment (e.g. darling, honey and love), from both group leaders and group partners, helped them increase their self-confidence in engaging in set tasks. Evidence from, for example, focus group 4 reveals the satisfaction and pride the participants felt regarding the outcomes of the collaborative writing exercises. They said that they had found the process enjoyable and their view, and one to which they were

entitled to have as participants in this study, was that their knowledge of English as well as their ability to write more effectively had improved as a result. As Ali, for example, commented in the final focus group on his feelings of his personal and writing skills development.

“Above all, I had great fun during the writing exercise and noticed and learnt how the skill of writing could be developed and practised outside the classroom setting. I feel more confident in myself and my writing skills in English” (focus group discussion 4).

I end this chapter with what I consider to be a rather insightful quotation from a student who identifies what she perceives as a crucial gap in her experience as a learner, a gap that resonates with the initial motivation for my undertaking this research:

“I really hope that in the near future our teachers understand that students can learn from each other and give more group work exercises, not only in English lessons, but also on other courses” (Ali: focus group discussion, 4).

I move now to the concluding chapter of this thesis picking up on the key findings discussed in this chapter to respond to the research questions and to assert the new knowledge that has emerged from this study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a summary of the findings of this study and then, my conclusion in relation to each research question. I then identify the contributions to new knowledge in the field of collaboration based on the insights derived from this study. I discuss the limitations and weaknesses of the research as well as considering its implications. I make suggestions for future research before concluding the thesis. This thesis is a study of the interactional processes, interpretations and perceptions of a small group of high school students on peer collaboration. The context is about how to encourage EFL learners, aged 16, grade 10, in a Turkish public high school to enhance their writing skills in English through peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity. I focused on two central aspects as in the following research questions:

1. How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
2. What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

6.2 Summary of the findings: responding to the research questions

This section presents a summary of the findings for this current study in relation to the two research questions of this thesis.

6.2.1 Research Question 1: How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?

In response to research question 1, the analyses carried out in Chapter 4 based on two groups of three Turkish high school EFL learners' accounts taken from focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats, and online discussion threads, revealed three conceptual categories of peer collaboration: (1) peer leadership, (2) peer affective support, (3) peer feedback. Drawing on previous research, reviewed in Chapter 2, in order to examine these findings, four peer collaboration types were characterised: (1) collectively contributing, (2) peer leadership, (3) peer affective support, and (4) peer teaching and learning.

According to the participants' accounts, a collectively contributory type of peer collaboration occurred in the editing and peer feedback stages of the writing exercise. At the beginning and in the middle, the participants were mostly dependent on their group leaders' assistance and guidance. However, towards the end of the writing exercise, when group leaders gave more freedom to their group partners and as the latter's confidence developed, the role of group leaders began to diminish. In its place, individual teacher agency developed and group partners at this stage began to contribute collectively when completing the writing exercise.

Both groups of participants felt a need to select a group leader among their group partners when the researcher / facilitator guidance was mainly withdrawn during the early stages. As a result, the participants mostly described peer collaboration during the online short story writing in terms of their interactions with their group leaders. Having elected a group leader from among their group partners, some participants reported that they felt a need to select one who seemed to them confident and knowledgeable about how to chair a group discussion, was comfortable with making decisions about what to write in a session and who, in their estimation, had better English knowledge than the other group partners in the group.

In Chapter 5, I discussed peer leadership styles in peer collaboration. I elaborated upon my findings about peer leadership styles in peer collaboration using the framework of Goleman et al. (2002) discussed in Chapter 2. Accordingly, I identified four different peer leadership styles of group leaders in my study, these being: (1) democratic, (2) commanding, (3) coaching and (4) affiliative. In terms of how these four peer leadership styles of group leaders were exhibited in this study by both groups of participants, in the planning stage of the writing exercise, the participants reported that when the group leaders made decisions for them about what to do at the beginning of each session and when they allocated individual writing tasks, these decision-making activities were considered as being peer collaboration. In group A (Nila, Gonca & Deniz), it emerged that Nila, the group leader, had a more 'democratic' peer leadership style, whereby she usually discussed points with her other group partners before making decisions about what to do in a session. By contrast, in group B (Ali, Attila & Selma) it was seen that Selma, the group leader, had a more 'commanding' peer leadership style in that she did not engage her group partners in discussion before she made decisions about what to do in a session. However, when allocating individual writing tasks to their group partners

at the beginning of the session, both groups' leaders exhibited a commanding peer leadership style and at this stage, scaffolding by them was strong.

During the composing writing stage, the participants reported that: (1) group leaders provided linguistic assistance to them, such as explaining vocabulary and grammar, showing how to make a sentence with linking words as well as how to check linguistic mistakes through a website or mobile application. (2) The group leaders gave corrective feedback and (3) very significant in terms of being a new contribution to knowledge unearthed by this research, they provided strong affective support to their group partners. For example, group leaders praised (e.g. well done!, excellent!, good work!) their group partners when they managed to achieve a task during the writing exercise and they used motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you) when their peers faced difficulties with writing in English, which were considered by the participants as being key motivational factors of peer collaboration. Regarding the peer leadership styles, both group leaders employed a 'coaching' and instructional peer leadership style when they provided linguistic assistance and corrective feedback to their group partners. Both group leaders also demonstrated an 'affiliative' peer leadership style when they praised or provided motivational phrases for their group partners. In the editing and peer feedback stages of writing exercise, both group leaders exhibited a democratic peer leadership style in that they shared leadership and thereby enabled their group partners to edit and provide corrective feedback to both their and the other group's short stories. Significantly, these ways of democratically communicating and collaborating evolved naturally from the early stages of a more top-down leadership style amongst the groups.

While previous studies on collaborative writing in an EFL context (e.g. Garcia Mayo, 2002; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Lund, 2008; Kessler, 2009; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Chao & Lo, 2011; Lin & Yang, 2011; Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Li & Zhu, 2013; Aydin & Yildiz, 2014) did not mention the peer affective factors of peer collaboration, in my study, the participants reported that (1) giving praise (e.g. well done! excellent! good work!) as group leaders, (2) receiving praise (e.g. well done! excellent! good work!) from group leaders, (3) giving motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you) as group leaders or a group partner, (4) receiving motivational phrases (e.g. you're doing well, don't give up, we're with you) from group leaders or from group partner(s), (5) feeling comfortable with each other when undertaking the

writing exercise, (6) informal language use in group discussions, including terms of endearment (e.g. darling, honey and love) and (7) the use of humour when undertaking individual writing tasks were considered as central to effective peer collaboration during their online short story writing exercise. It can be concluded that peer collaboration was a developmental and exponentially inclusive and shared process in which peer affective factors were crucial.

6.2.2 Research Question 2: What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

I have shown how the analyses carried out in Chapter 4 of Turkish high school EFL learners' accounts in focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats, and online discussion threads led to the identification and characterisation of three concepts of peer collaboration: (1) collectively contributing, (2) peer leadership, and (3) peer affective support. In the light of these findings, I respond now to the second research question.

Regarding a collectively contributing type of peer collaboration, the participants reported that when they gave corrective feedback collectively as a group to both their and other group's short story, this increased their self-confidence in writing in English as well as enabling them to develop self-correction techniques. Regarding the participants' recounting about how peer leadership as peer collaboration had an impact on the EFL learners' writing development in English during the online short story writing, the key findings taken from the comments of the group members were that:

- (1) their group leaders' decision-making facilitated the planning stage of group writing process;
- (2) group partners gained self-confidence in writing in English when they received linguistic guidance from their group leaders;
- (3) group partners learnt better English from their group leaders;
- (4) group partners found the praise received from their group leaders motivational for writing in English,
- (5) group partners found their group leaders' corrective feedback instructional;
- (6) group partners found that their group leader's corrective feedback increased their motivation towards writing in English.

It can be seen that the group participants felt that they benefited in many ways in terms of the advancement of the task, linguistic knowledge and self-confidence.

Some differences between this ‘advancement’ in the two of the data sets (focus group discussions and online one-to-one chats) became apparent. For example, in the focus group discussions, the participants only reported that the group leaders’ decision-making facilitated the planning stage of collaborative writing process, whereas in online one-to-one chats, some of them said that they felt there was lack of group planning, because of their group leaders’ lack of coordination at this point of the exercise. Another noticeable difference was in relation to the group leaders, who in online one-to-one chats complained that they felt that they did not benefit very much from their group partners in terms of advancing their own writing development in English during the online short story writing activity, because their own knowledge of English was more advanced. Consequently, they learnt very little from other group members. However, they did report during the focus group discussions that they had benefited from peer collaboration when they were helping their group partners by providing linguistic assistance. That is, according to the group leaders, this type of peer collaboration in the online short story writing led to them developing their own linguistic knowledge to some extent through having to conduct linguistic searches either of online sources or books in order to engage in instructional leadership.

Regarding peer affective support, all the participants reported that when they received motivational phrases from their group partners, this increased their self-confidence towards writing in English. According to them, feeling comfortable with each other during the group exercise enabled them to reduce their apprehension about writing in English and this also led to a level of trust, such that they were not afraid to bring their writing-related problems into the open for discussion. The use of humour in this regard in reducing their initial apprehension was considered by the participants as being crucial. As the researcher, the advancement in the undertaking of the task and the growth in self-confidence were very visible to me and I did of course have sight of their writing that evidenced improvement in writing skills. At this point, I provide just one piece of evidence to demonstrate ‘improvement’, defined online as ‘advance, development, refinement’ *inter alia*, for the reader’s interest:

The episode below was taken from the fourth session of group A (Nila, Deniz & Gonca). Deniz asks how to use the linking word “by the time” in a sentence in English and Nila [the group leader] assists her.

Deniz: Nila, I need your help.

Nila: Okay honey, what is the problem?

Deniz: I wanted to say Sally aşağı indiğinde telefon çoktan susmuştu [By the time Sally went downstairs, the phone had already stopped ringing.]

Deniz: I don't know which linker to use here. Could you help me ? Should I use when?

Nila: Well, I think you should use ‘-by the time’ here.

Deniz: I have just checked the meaning in Sesli Sozluk [online dictionary], that goes very well in this sentence.

Deniz: But I don't know how to use “-by the time” in a sentence.

Nila: Okay. Wait a second.

Nila: Check out this site:

<http://ingilizcedershanesi.blogspot.co.uk/2008/08/present-perfect-tense-with-just-already.html>

Nila: By the time the rain started, they had already returned from shopping. As you see in this example, the first sentence is past tense and the second one is past perfect tense. Make your own sentence this way.

Deniz: By the time Sally went downstairs, the telephone had stopped?

Nila: Very good! I just want to add ‘telephone had stopped ringing’

Deniz: Thank you very much my darling.

However, I add this example simply to lend weight and give value to the perceptions of the students. I would reiterate at this point that a scrutiny of the outcomes was in no way an aim of this research and although I monitored their activity as part of my research role, such scrutiny was not undertaken. This would obviously be an interesting topic for further research.

In the following section, I identify the contributions of this current study to knowledge in the field of collaborative writing in the EFL context.

6.3 Contributions to knowledge in the field

Theoretical contributions

The findings of this present study make a number of potentially important theoretical contributions to knowledge in the field, which inform and hence, advance the existing theoretical perceptions on peer collaboration in EFL writing, especially at the level of secondary school EFL learners and particularly, in the context of Turkey.

First, as explained in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.5.2), there has been little research about peer leadership styles in collaborative writing in EFL contexts. Regarding the extant scholarship on this matter, Storch & Aldosari (2013) define peer leaders as expert peers, whereas Li & Zhu (2013) term them authoritative peers. In this study, I expanded these definitions and illustrated the different peer leadership styles that emerged by drawing on the framework of Goleman et al. (2002) about group leadership styles, accordingly identifying four types of peer leadership (1) democratic, (2) commanding, (3) coaching and (4) affiliative. With reference to this framework, I have discussed the evolution in the different leadership styles of the group leaders during the progress of the collaborative online short story writing activity (see Chapter 5, subsection 5.3.1). Based on the participants' views on peer leadership during the activity, peer leadership styles of the group leaders were interpreted using this framework with respect to the planning stage of writing, where group A's leader was considered more 'democratic', while group B's was seen as being more 'commanding'. During the composing stage, both groups' leaders mostly engaged in 'coaching' peer leadership styles when they provided linguistic assistance and corrective feedback to their group partners. However, both demonstrated an 'affiliative' peer leadership style when they praised and sent motivational phrases to their group partners. In the editing and peer feedback stage of writing, both group leaders shifted to a 'democratic' peer leadership style, allowing their group partners to undertake the writing activity collectively. This is an important contribution to new knowledge as it uncovers how student leadership needs and styles evolve over time when students are left to themselves. As such, it provides valuable information to teachers about the need to be aware of and encourage the development of peer leadership, if effective collaborative work of this kind is to succeed in achieving its goals. This study also sheds light on the way secondary school students, when working collaboratively, can develop their own leadership styles, recognizing the importance of 'a lead' – being what the students called 'the backbone' - in such activity.

Instinctively, without any knowledge of the canon of literature on the topic of leadership, they willingly, if a little apprehensively at first, developed their leadership roles and styles with a prime concern to be effective in their instruction of their peers and to motivate them. They did this through a skillful and nuanced leadership style of their own making that ultimately went beyond the traditional rigid categorization of leadership including the rather static framework of Goleman et al (2002). It is a mode of leadership in which cognitive and affective inter-relations articulated harmoniously and flexibly to bring about productive, enjoyable collaborative work. This is no mean feat for young school students whose own experience was limited to rather routine modes of collaboration such as pair work on exercises in class and where their exposure had been to traditional teacher and head teacher leadership of a top-down kind. In conclusion, leadership features quite significantly in this study because of the way that I encouraged the groups to assume agency and to organise themselves. In order to proceed with the given task, the students decided to elect a peer to take on a leadership role. It was a role that as can be seen in the data chapters, evolved and reflected key dimensions of instructional leadership (peer leaders being deemed the most capable), and shared leadership in negotiating tasks to take charge of for each group member. The participants in this study acknowledged the potential of the peer leaders to use their personal authority and better linguistic knowledge to ‘instruct’ and guide towards the more participative and consensual approach as discussed by Goleman et al. (ibid.). The peer leaders demonstrated many of the traits and stylistic features of leadership as discussed such as having an overview, making and welcoming suggestions, giving feedback and praise, in a way that was essential for the progress of the group dynamics and work outcomes. It was a role the peer leaders embraced and enjoyed according to the data and that the other participants, the willing ‘followers’ (essential to the effective enactment of leadership according to Kellerman, 2008), found beneficial.

Second, as discussed also in Chapter 2, the literature on peer affective factors in peer collaboration in EFL context, especially in relation to writing skills, is scant. In the context of EFL writing in regards to peer collaboration, the concept of peer affective factors is limited to writing anxiety (e.g. Kurt & Atay, 2007 and Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015) and praise as peer feedback (Lee, 2010). In the context of EFL speaking, a study by Nguyen (2013) found that motivational phrases used in peer collaboration enabled learners to support each other in sustaining task engagement, building a rapport,

increasing self-confidence and engendering a sense of safety when undertaking collaborative work. In this study, I have extended the knowledge of peer affective factors in peer collaboration specifically in the Turkish public high school context and with regard to collaborative writing. For example, the participants of the current study highlighted how the group leaders gave praise to their group partners to show their approval when they achieved an allocated task during the writing exercise. Moreover, the group leaders or group partners gave motivational phrases when a participant faced difficulties in making progress. The participants reported how they felt comfortable with each other when undertaking their online short story writing exercise in groups, as evidenced in their use of informal language in group discussions and the deployment of humour when undertaking individual writing tasks, both of which they considered as being peer collaboration. Furthermore, the findings in this study have shown that the students developed greater self-confidence as well as increased self-motivation, with their writing apprehension decreasing as a result of these peer affective factors. As mentioned previously, the peer leaders' ability to bring together the affective and the cognitive enabled the development within the group of a fundamental equality of esteem and of relationship, and a working relationship cemented by a deep and caring friendship. They furthermore had the emotional intelligence to be able to deal with any tensions and disagreements in a quiet, negotiated way.

This research has generated pedagogical insights about collaborative writing, not just as a mechanical linguistic exercise in groups, for it has also shown how students, given time and support, can develop confidence, self-esteem and social skills as well as construct their own new knowledge about writing through Facebook social interactions. Such an exercise involves much more than simply being a 'writing exercise', for as Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985: 11) point out: 'The affective dimension has to be taken into account when we are engaged in our own learning activities, and when we are assisting others in this process'. This dimension was emphasized by the participants as being the key motivator for overcoming any obstacles that were hindering the development of their writing and in this research, the participants were successful in taking this dimension into account. The participants recognized their achievement and were rightfully proud of themselves and of each other. There is scope and potential for teachers to enable such achievements in similar contexts given certain conditions to which I will refer later in this chapter.

Methodological contributions

Concerning my methodological contribution to the knowledge in the field of peer collaboration in EFL writing, previously, no other study has been conducted in the context of a Turkish public high school, EFL classroom (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.5.1). The extant studies have gathered data from pair / group talks (e.g. Garcia Mayo, 2002; Storch & Aldosari, 2013), pre-tests and post-tests (e.g. Kuiken & Vedder, 2002), questionnaires (Lin & Yang, 2011), interviews (e.g. Kessler, 2009; Chao & Lo, 2009; Miyozoe & Anderson, 2010; Li & Yang, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013, online discussion threads (e.g. Li & Zhu, 2013), reflective logs (Li & Yang, 2011). The current study is novel, as it involved collecting data from focus group discussions, which was triangulated using the content of the participants' one-to-one chats, so as to gain insights into the processes and the participants' perceptions regarding peer collaboration in online short story writing. As commented previously, I was aware of the issues concerning self-reporting by school student and reliability although these, Nutbrown & Hannon, (2003), for example, would contend, are the same issues that might arise with self-reporting from and interviews/focus groups held with adults. The focus group format created an atmosphere of openness and trust that encouraged spontaneous and honest responses and discussion. I am confident the participants gave thoughtful, impassioned and honest responses as a result of the research design. In the light of this, I conclude that this approach has provided robust outcomes, is replicable and hence, drawing on the secondary school participants' views, has been fit for purpose.

I have identified a way, which the participant high school learners assert, could enhance their English writing skills, one that involves providing opportunities for peer collaboration taking place over an appropriate period of time. In this study, the EFL learners as they progressed through collaborative writing activity moved from a state of dependence on their group leaders when undertaking the exercise to a stage towards the end of when they started to become more autonomous. That is, they eventually became able to contribute to the writing activity collectively and collaboratively in a more self-directed way. Compared to previous studies with shorter durations of time for collaborative writing exercises (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.5.1), with this study, the longer period of time enabled the development of a process from which important findings emerged, thus underlining the importance of allowing students to have the time to develop friendship, ways of working, styles of leadership and a culture of trust that I

have found is essential in order to promote effective collaborative writing. As such, to conclude, this research offers a ‘more nuanced and complex understanding of educational experiences, identities, processes, practices and relations’ (Burke & Kirton, 2006: 2) within the field of peer collaboration which is, as Burke and Kirton suggest, is the value of such small scale research.

6.4 Limitations and weaknesses of the study

In order to address the research questions of this study, I have collected a wide variety of data from focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats, and online discussion boards. I have been very attentive to undertaking careful analysis (utilizing an open coding analytical approach when analyzing these data sets) and to being critically reflexive throughout the entire process. However, some limitations emerged in research design and analysis which needed to be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings and contributions.

By focusing on two groups of three, in total six Turkish high school EFL learners’ interpretations of peer collaboration and their perceptions on the impacts of peer collaboration on their writing development during an online short story writing activity which lasted over a period of time, I obtained a detailed set of data which allowed for an in-depth analysis of understanding of peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity for these Turkish EFL learners. Nevertheless, as this study was a qualitative study by nature, the analysis of peer collaboration processes may have been influenced by my subjective opinion because I was the only researcher who carried out the analysis of the data sets. However, in order to meet this challenge, as mentioned in Chapter 3, section 3.7, I employed four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) by Lincoln & Guba (1985) to ensure the trustworthiness of this study. For example, for the credibility of the findings, I used methods triangulation which were focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats, and online discussion boards. Also, for the credibility and dependability of the findings, my Turkish colleagues and a Turkish professor in the field of ELT took part in some of the coding and analysis of the data collection. For the transferability of the findings, I provided a detailed contextual information. I also provided detailed information about the data collection, coding and

analysis processes with the purpose of ensuring that the research process was adequately transparent for the readers.

As mentioned previously, I have been aware of issues concerning using data based mainly on student self-reporting but I defend this decision in this thesis since the research has been precisely about the student/participant perceptions of peer collaboration and therefore the student interactions and perceptions have been the main source of investigation in this research. I concur with Docherty & Sandelowski, for example, (1999:177) who write that students can be seen as ‘the best sources of information about themselves’. I also consider the student voice in this research a source of richness rather than a weakness in providing new insights to enable a better understanding of peer learning, collaboration and leadership as seen from the students’ own perception and agree with Flutter and Rudduck (2004:7) who concluded from their study of consulting pupils that: ‘Pupils of all ages can show a remarkable capacity to discuss their learning in a considered and insightful way... and that the opportunity to participate in a learning-focused dialogue may ... also have a beneficial effect on pupils’ performance’.

Another limitation of this study was about the number of the participants. It was a very small scale study, conducted with a relatively small number of participants (in total 6 participants) in one high school involving only one age range of 16 year old high school students and what is more they were enthusiastic volunteers. All these matters restrict any generalisation of the findings to other high schools, students or contexts. However, the insights gained were substantial for this particular context and the outcome of such small scale research I have shown can add nuanced findings to the field about how EFL teaching and learning in Turkey and in similar educational contexts could be developed in a more student-centred way with more student autonomy through online-based small group collaborative writing activities.

6.5 Implications of the study for EFL practice

Currently, there is very little collaborative practice of this kind taking place in EFL classrooms and yet, this study has shown its many potential benefits. There are a number of practical pedagogical implications from the findings of this current study from which teachers of EFL and EFL learners in Turkish high schools could benefit, particularly if the findings of the current study are verified by further research on a similar topic in

different contexts. Teachers of EFL in Turkey and potentially in other contexts where teacher-led instruction predominates might consider implementing similar collaborative writing activities during English lessons. I see no conflict between face to face instruction in the EFL classroom and online student collaboration, since they could be used in a complementary way, the balance adjusted according to the task and age of the students. Based on my experiences in this research, however, I would recommend that teachers of EFL consider setting, group size and composition, task type and the duration of a collaborative writing activity that best suit their aim. In favour of the small group format was the fact that the '2 plus 1' (peer leader plus group participants) provided a special intimacy based on friendship and compassion that generated powerful peer affective factors and it is a format I recommend. Regarding the setting of such activities, if unable to implement collaborative writing in a classroom setting or only minimally so, there is the possibility for it to be set as assignments outside the classroom, in an online setting, as this study has shown. This would comply with the requirement for a varied teaching approach promoted by the Turkish MONE (2011) and also help those teachers who experience difficulties in responding effectively to this, and offer another way to cope with time pressures. It is of note that the participants in this study were independently able to meet several of the objectives of the MONE. Of equal importance is the fact that the students claimed to have enjoyed and been motivated by the opportunity and challenge to undertake this online collaborative learning as well as benefiting from it both in linguistic terms and affective support. The online opportunity, crucially, gave them independence and ownership of their own learning such that they now have the ability to move it forward in their own way in their own time and autonomously. The participants had strong views about this as for example, Ali said,

'I really hope that in the near future our teachers understand that students can learn from each other and give more group work exercises, not only in English lessons, but also on other courses'.

Nila, a group leader, even went as far as to say the research had inspired her to want to be a teacher of the kind to promote autonomous learning,

‘Having been part of this study, I’ve expressed my decision about becoming a teacher of English in the future openly’.

She also said the research had led her to want to do more collaborative writing,

‘I’ve learnt how to put my English knowledge into practice. After this study, I’m planning to create a weblog and write small short stories, poems, reflections of my life and my thoughts in English. I’ll share my writings in English to the world and people who know English can read and comment on my writings.’

I think that teacher-readers in particular, in considering engaging in the development of collaborative writing exercises like the one in this research will, like me, find these statements of intent powerful and heartening outcomes of learning contexts. I hope they will find these outcomes useful for inspiring a broadening of their pedagogical repertoire especially where peer collaboration is concerned.

As explained in Chapter 2 (see subsection 2.4.1), previous studies undertook collaborative writing activities in the online settings of wikis, weblogs and forums, whereas I opted for a collaborative writing activity in a Facebook group. As a researcher, I did not experience difficulty showing the participants how to use the setting of this current study (Facebook group), because they were already competent in and enthusiastic about using it for. They were digitally literate in terms of confidently using PCs and smart phones and, through necessity, making effective use of online sources, such as online bilingual dictionaries, Google translate, grammar and spell checkers of which they made extensive use. This was especially the case with the use of their smart phones as there were no or few laptops and desktop computers in some participants’ homes. All the participants were able to join in and benefit from the present study because they were all confident and prolific users of their smartphones. Facebook can be downloaded as a mobile application to smartphones and can thus facilitate written discussions. The online setting of a wiki does not have a mobile application, thus teachers engaging with this would need to consider whether all the students were able to access laptops or desktop computers to undertake a collaborative writing activity. The participants in this study indicated the limited availability of laptops was potentially

disadvantageous to those students, if they could only use those devices, whereas by using FB given the widespread ownership of smartphones, this would allow for universal participation in any such exercise.

Concerning the group size and composition, previous studies on collaborative writing in an EFL context chose to work with either pairs or small groups of three or four (see Chapter 2, subsection, 2.5.1) and in this study, I chose groups of three that in fact worked perfectly. Storch (2013) explained in her book on collaborative writing in L2 classrooms, how researchers tend to use pairs in face-to-face collaborative writing projects, whereas collaborative writing projects taking place in an online setting, such as a wiki, employ small to medium-sized groups. As far as pair / group formation is concerned, researchers in previous studies either paired / grouped their participants themselves (e.g. Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Garcia Mayo, 2002; Storch & Aldosari, 2013; Aydin & Yildiz, 2014) or allowed them to select their own pair / group partner(s) (e.g. Chao & Lo, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013). In this research, I allowed my participants to choose their group partners and those who were close friends decided to work together. From the participants' views, the fact that they felt comfortable with each other enabled them to undertake the writing task successfully. Storch (2013:163) highlighted the advantage of allowing students to choose their group partners as "students choose to work with peers who work with peers with whom they are familiar, and this means that they may be more comfortable and willing to challenge each other's suggestions and offer repairs." Based on my experience in this research, I recommend teachers of EFL allow their students to choose their group partners as far as possible, bearing in mind the need to ensure productive and inclusive working groups.

I recommend teachers of EFL choose short story writing- an imaginative piece of writing- when implementing collaborative writing activities. In this study, I did so in the collaborative writing exercise and based on my participants' accounts, they found short story writing engaging and motivating as well as being a manageable task in its brevity, simple structure and scope for collaborative and different types of input. The idea of stories appealed to the participants' imagination and led to much humour that in turn fuelled their motivation and confidence to write. The stories they produced told a good tale, had effective description, some direct speech and a punchy ending. If teachers of EFL, especially those in Turkish public high schools, do not favour short story writing or feel constrained by the course book, there are other possibilities for collaborative

writing exercises, such as can be found in my participants' textbook (see Appendix XVI), which also lend themselves to collaborative work.

Whatever activity an EFL teacher chooses, my research outcomes indicate the need for the teacher to plan the activity with the students to decide a timeframe and a topic. It is important to encourage students with some motivational phrases and activities at the start of the collaborative writing exercise in order to build confidence, before leaving them to get on with the activity. Motivated students who feel assured that they can manage to undertake the writing exercise will more likely succeed in doing so. The duration of the collaborative writing activity is also important. Previous studies featured the undertaking of collaborative writing activities within one session (between 30 to 60 minutes). However, others have involved undertaking such activities over a period of time, such as Chao & Lo's (2011), where the participants undertook a collaborative writing activity over five weeks and Shehadeh's (2011) participants engaged in collaborative writing over 16 weeks. However, in that study the participants in pairs wrote a different writing task each week. In this study, I asked my participants in groups of three to undertake a single writing exercise over seven weeks. For prospective researchers who wish to investigate the nature of peer collaboration in the context of L2 writing as I have done, I recommend them to conduct a collaborative writing exercise for at least seven weeks. However, for teachers of EFL, depending on the task and their students' views and suggestions, the duration of the writing activity could be shorter. The key point is to allow enough time for the students to develop collaborative group working capacity of 'trust, support and communication skills' as identified in Kutnick et al. (2005:352) so as to enable them to work productively and enhance their peer affective skills alongside their cognitive skills. Based on my observations in this study, using the Internet when undertaking the collaborative writing activity, as previously mentioned facilitated my participants to be able to access online dictionaries and other resources, such as Google Translate and websites concerned with English language grammar explanations. Consequently, teachers of EFL would need to make sure that at least one of the group partners can access the Internet from either his/her smartphone or the school's computer.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1 (see subsection 1.4.3), teachers of EFL in Turkish public high schools were advised by the Turkish MONE (2011) that they should allocate no more than 20 minutes for pair / group work exercises. This puts Turkish EFL teachers

in quite a difficult position with regard to developing writing skills. However, I am proposing that following discussion with the students as to the structure of the activity, and initiating it with their agreed guidelines, then teachers can enable their students to undertake the writing themselves in small groups, for example, either during school breaks or online with the encouragement and supportive culture in which to develop their friendship and leadership potential. On the other hand, teachers could take a 'flipped learning' approach (Bergmann & Sams, (2012); Brame, (2013); Muldrow, K., (2013) whereby the learners are required to undertake substantial study and advance preparation of the content independently online for their lessons which are then used by the students, with the teacher's guidance to maximize practice of the linguistic items that have been researched and explored as part of the advance preparation. In this way, students can initiate/prepare an activity themselves with just the minimal necessary guidance, depending on the students' age and experience. There are myriad possibilities to suit all contexts and thus the potential to research collaborative writing in a variety of ways in the future.

6.6 Suggestions for future research

The findings of this current study have elicited a number of issues, which could provide a springboard for researchers who are interested in investigating further the topic of collaborative writing in an EFL context. One of the key findings of the study showed that when little teacher/facilitator guidance was given to EFL learners during the collaborative writing task, they felt the need to elect a group leader among their group partners. This led these learners to become dependent during the initial stages, being under the guidance of their group leader. This reflects the cultural context of the everyday Turkish EFL classroom, which is mainly teacher-led and which the participants reported they had been accustomed to when asked to describe their language learning histories. However, in this study, I have shown how peer leadership styles used by the group leaders in peer collaboration develop and mature to enhance peer leadership and peer affective factors in their learning. It could be useful for researchers who wish to apply a student-centred approach to learning, to explore and expand the knowledge of peer leadership styles in peer collaboration with different age ranges, different EFL proficiency levels and different types of schools, for example, in a Turkish Science High school or in one of the types of private schools. How peer leadership is evidenced and evolves in such research would add to the knowledge in the field of peer leadership in

peer collaboration.

Another key finding of the present study is that peer affective elements in peer collaboration according to the participants' perceptions facilitated the EFL learners' English writing development. It would be beneficial to explore peer affective elements in peer collaboration in other small scale studies in the context of EFL writing with different age ranges, different EFL proficiency levels and different types of schools so as to provide a greater range of insights into the ways that affective and cognitive dimensions articulate for the purpose of comparison.

Investigating more about the views of EFL learners and teachers/facilitators in relation to the implementation of collaborative writing activities in social networking settings, particularly in Facebook groups, would provide more insights into this particular setting. In my opinion, this is especially valuable when the views are elicited from the students themselves. In this study, after initial nervousness at the beginning of the project, the participants were able to give vibrant, honest and amusing accounts of their learning experiences and their views on their progress. Encouraging the student voice would deliver helpful feedback to EFL teachers about student individual challenges, needs and preferences and perhaps, novel ways to implement new EFL curriculum requirements.

A logical extension of this research would be to explore how teachers could incorporate this type of online peer collaboration into their classroom face to face teaching. The Turkish colleague whose students were involved in this research has already instigated a Facebook group to work collaboratively in her class in the light of the feedback from the students in this study given their evident enjoyment and benefit. Another obvious extension would be to investigate the linguistic development of the EFL learners' writing, a topic that is beyond the scope of this thesis although I find the student self-assessment of their work a valuable insight into their developing autonomy.

6.7 Final words

I have been focusing on eliciting and understanding student perceptions on the meaning of peer collaboration within the context of a collaborative writing exercise in EFL in research designed to promote collaborative EFL learning through the skill of writing in an online social networking setting. Specifically, Facebook was employed in a Turkish context for two scholarly studies since 2010, beginning with a small scale masters level

dissertation on online peer feedback among Turkish EFL learners in that year. Since then I have undertaken this PhD research on peer collaboration in online short story writing among EFL learners in a Turkish high school context between 2012 and 2015 with a focus on the participants' perceptions on this. There has been no other research undertaken in this context. In my ongoing work with EFL teachers, I intend to share and collaborate with them on this topic and to encourage teachers themselves to engage in reflective practice to enable them to have "the necessary sense of self-efficacy to create personal solutions to problems" (Larrivee, 2000: 294). My experience from carrying out these two studies has convinced me that if students were relocated to the centre of learning by being given opportunities with encouragement and support for online as well as in- class collaborative learning activities and above all, encouraged to develop affective support and the potential for self-regulation, then levels of success in writing by Turkish EFL students would be greater. Inter-relationships would also be richer and more productive for both teachers and the students than at present. Such relationships this study has shown to be both enabling and motivating in creative output and in productive interactional teaching and learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Content pages from the textbook “Yes You Can” by Persembe, Bulug & Canmetin (2012)

The textbook comprises eight themes including (1) people and society, (2) youth, (3) communication, (4) personality and character, (5) art, (6) tourism, (7) nature and environment, and (8) history.

TABLE OF CONTENTS			
THEMES	OUTCOMES	LANGUAGE AREAS AND STRUCTURE	VOCABULARY
1- PEOPLE AND SOCIETY 1A- My Day 1B- Different Lifestyles 1C- A London Trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding and following instructions related to daily routines. - Expressing hobbies, likes and dislikes. - Asking for and giving information about routines and hobbies. - Understanding specific information. - Understanding and following instructions related to daily routines. - Comparing people / things and events. - Giving advice. - Expressing opinions. - Asking for and giving information about travelling. - Understanding diagrams, symbols and signs. - Talking about present abilities. - Expressing demands. - Expressing opinions. 	<p>Simple Present Tense</p> <p>Frequency adverbs: always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, seldom, hardly ever, never.</p> <p>Can (permission & request)</p>	<p>Nouns: jogging, shower, hobby, Arts, Music, painting, snack, guitar practice, early person, brunch, barbecue, routine, weather forecast, sunshine, temperature, blog, intern doctor, work life, working hours, free time, fun, off day, sofa, coiffeur, limousine, recording studio, rehearsal, manager.</p> <p>Verbs: get dressed, relax, be on duty, change, spend, rest, lie, visit.</p> <p>Adjectives: close, amusing, entertaining, typical, individual.</p> <p>Adverbs: always, usually, often, rarely, never, generally, sometimes.</p>
2-YOUTH 2A- Camping 2B- Youth Exchange 2C- Work and Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding diagrams, symbols and signs. - Understanding specific information. - Comparing people / things and events. - Asking for and giving information about routines. - Making an announcement. - Keeping a diary. - Giving information about international events. - Expressing opinions. - Talking about daily relations. - Expressing complaints and demands. - Understanding numerical information. - Describing a place. - Asking for and giving information about places. - Making phone calls. - Understanding descriptions. - Expressing experiences. 	<p>Present Continuous Tense</p> <p>Present Simple vs. Present Continuous</p> <p>Modals: should, need to, must, have to, may, and might.</p> <p>Prepositions of place: in, on, next to, behind, in front of.</p>	<p>Nouns: water closet, trainers, tent, pan, ground, log, sleeping bag, firewood, central heating, bush, leader, chlorine tablets, sleeping mat, rucksack, torch, flask, scout, trekking, threat, mobility, candidate, proficiency, restriction, exchange programme, time line, step.</p> <p>Verbs: avoid, peel, tidy, prepare, fall asleep, take a nap, expose.</p> <p>Adjectives: tiny, sweet, homesick, voluntary, leading, peaceful, global, environmental, non-profit, intercultural, open.</p> <p>Phrasal Verbs: roll up, put up, pick up, get up, fill in.</p>

TABLE OF CONTENTS			
THEMES	OUTCOMES	LANGUAGE AREAS AND STRUCTURE	VOCABULARY
3-COMMUNICATION 3A- Media 3B- Computers and the Net 3C- Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparing present and past. - Expressing past events. - Understanding specific information. - Understanding tables and charts. - Giving a presentation. - Summarizing ideas / events. - Expressing experiences. - Comparing people / things and events. - Asking for and giving information about technology. - Inviting someone. - Describing events / people. - Understanding and expressing agreement / disagreement. - Summarizing a past event. 	<p>Simple Past Tense (to be past, regular & irregular verbs)</p> <p>Coordinating conjunctions: and, or, but / yet, because / for, so.</p> <p>Used to</p> <p>Prepositions of time: in, on, at.</p> <p>Adverbs of manner</p>	<p>Nouns: issue, idea, plug, blog, soundtrack, rate, questionnaire, habit, result, heart transplant, profanity, commode, jail, application, cursor, file.</p> <p>Verbs: go black, summarise, present, appear, act, produce, divorce, refer, worry, backup.</p> <p>Adjectives: gorgeous, touching, fascinating, well-paid, commercial.</p> <p>Adverbs: subconsciously, separately, slightly, desperately, wearily, calmly, nervously.</p> <p>Phrasal Verbs: turn down, drop out (of), hand out, find out, log on.</p>
4- PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER 4A- Types of People 4B- Hobbies and Phobias 4C- Habits and Intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparing people / things and events. - Understanding and following instructions related to daily routines. - Understanding symbols. - Understanding specific information. - Expressing past experiences. - Expressing hobbies, phobias, likes and dislikes. - Giving personal information. - Comparing people / things and events. - Asking for and giving information about future plans. - Giving a presentation. - Describing habits and intentions. 	<p>Comparative & superlative adjectives</p> <p>Gerund & infinitive</p> <p>Future Tenses (be going to, will, present continuous future meaning)</p>	<p>Nouns: freak, perfectionist, coldness, obsession, demand, rival, babysitting, parcel, cash, phobia, celebrity, wing, beak, charity, axe.</p> <p>Verbs: keep neat/dry, spoil, handle, scare, be fond of, confess, flap.</p> <p>Adjectives: sociable, easy going, strict, over protective, sticky, simple minded, loyal, ambitious, determined, obsessive, lively, materialistic, sympathetic, supportive, reliable, motherly.</p> <p>Adverbs: actually, probably</p> <p>Phrasal verbs: deal with, fed up with, try on.</p>

TABLE OF CONTENTS			
THEMES	OUTCOMES	LANGUAGE AREAS AND STRUCTURE	VOCABULARY
5-ART	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding specific information. - Summarizing stories. - Narrating a past event. - Making a debate. - Composing stories. - Expressing feelings and opinions about literature, art and music. 	Past Continuous Tense	<p>Nouns: folk tale, Cherokee, tribe, corn, howl, battle, Evil, sorrow, jealousy, regret, greed, guilt, ego, generosity, empathy, weapon, starfish, low-tide, high-tide, poem, ambition, journalist, conservatory.</p>
5A-Short Stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making predictions. - Expressing ambitions. - Expressing reason and result. 	Past Continuous vs. Past Simple	<p>Verbs: skim, sip, feed, symbolise, reflect, howl, bear, aim, cross.</p>
5B- Poems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking about / Composing (auto) biographies. - Expressing agreement / disagreement. 	Conditionals (Zero and first)	<p>Adjectives: scared, wrinkled, major, cruel, rough, psychedelic.</p>
5C-Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressing preferences, likes and dislikes. - Summarising events. - Expressing wishes, demands, and complaints. 	Possessive pronouns vs. Possessive adjectives	<p>Adverbs: suddenly, curiously, silently, primarily, internationally.</p> <p>Phrasal verbs: take back, be keen on, fall off, knock down.</p>
6-TOURISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making predictions. - Describing / Comparing people, things and places. - Expressing experiences. - Giving information about dreams and feelings. - Expressing future plans and arrangements. 	Order of adjectives	<p>Nouns: virtual tourism, exploration area, mountaineering, trekking, bungee jumping, mountain biking, rafting, zip-lining, rock climbing, ghetto tourism, scuba diving, hang gliding, ski, snowboarding, border, healthcare, (cosmetic) surgery, replacement.</p>
6A- Types of Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding abbreviations and informal letters. - Expressing agreement / disagreement. 	Present Continuous for Future	<p>Verbs: involve, provide, recommend, board, observe.</p>
6B- Unusual Travellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressing hobbies and interests. - Understanding stories. - Making an interview. - Understanding / Composing formal letters. 	Basic question forms (Wh- questions)	<p>Adjectives: remote, exotic, recent, joint, cardiac, dental, therapeutic, affordable, recreational, leisure, incredible.</p>
6C- Travelling Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaining about accommodation. - Expressing wishes, demands, and complaints. - Guessing the topic. 	Too & enough	<p>Adverbs: instead, for a while.</p> <p>Phrasal verbs: lift off, sign off.</p>

TABLE OF CONTENTS			
THEMES	OUTCOMES	LANGUAGE AREAS AND STRUCTURE	VOCABULARY
7-NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding past events. - Asking for and giving information about disasters. - Understanding short texts. - Guessing the topic. - Giving and getting feedback. - Understanding / composing informal letters. - Expressing reason and result. - Making predictions. - Expressing future plans. - Asking for and giving information about holidays. 	Passive voice (present & past) Reflexive pronouns Countable & uncountable nouns	Nouns: earthquake, avalanche, famine, drought, chieftain, resident, soccer, condition, policy, shortage, witness, ash, lava, flood, disaster, ruin, eruption, suburb, hurricane, globetrotter, addict, potential, date, well, mud. Verbs: shake, affect, trigger, exist, extend, feed, estimate, occur, bury, rediscover, protect. Adjectives: devastating, vast, accidental, curious, enchanting. Adverbs: partially, popularly, environmentally, domestically. Phrasal verbs: take place.
7A- Natural Disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding messages in advertisements, announcements and posters. - Talking about energy and environment. - Making a debate. - Asking for and giving information about an event. - Preparing a(n) announcement / invitation card / poster / advertisement. - Inviting someone. 	Quantifiers: much, many, some, any, few, a few, little, a little, a lot of. Articles (definite, indefinite and zero)	
7B- Strange Places			
7C- Alternative Energy			
8-HISTORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding / composing invitation cards. - Making predictions. - Making an invitation / suggestion / apology. - Expressing reason and result. - Expressing experiences. - Understanding short texts. - Talking about attractions. - Understanding and following instructions related to daily routines. - Expressing daily routines. - Understanding, giving and following instructions. - Telling stories. - Composing biographies. 	Present Perfect Tense (just, yet, already, ever, never, before) Imperatives	Nouns: exhibition, showcase, fine art, memo pad, sense, prize, monument, citizen, overcrowd, ferry, attraction, passenger, excavation, artefact, scenery, soil, chore, find, archaeology, fossil, dough, twig, chisel, tweezers, Verbs: be on display, warn, engaged, receive, immerse, pertain, mention, dedicate, sip. Adjectives: multi-sensory, 3-D, multiple, appropriate, dehydrated, juicy, recovered, foggy, tough, archaeological, fake, brewed. Adverbs: cordially, kindly, firmly. Phrasal verbs: chip away at, break away, turn out, set on.
8A- Museums			
8B- Historical Attractions			
8C- Archaeological Finds			

Appendix II

Pilot Study (for upgrade document)

PILOT STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The present study is an exploratory research for which no clear guidelines about the methodology were evident from the literature. Therefore, before conducting the main study, I decided to undertake a pilot study to inform and shape the methodology for the main research. In this regard, I designed this pilot study with a provisional methodology.

This chapter is divided into nine sections. The first (this) section starts with a brief introduction and then the second provides the context of the pilot study including the location, school and participants. The third section explains the ethical considerations and the fourth section describes the aims and design of the pilot study. The fifth describes the procedures of the pilot study. The sixth section explains the data collection and analysis procedures. The seventh section presents the findings of the pilot study, whilst the eighth considers the lessons learnt from the pilot study. The final section, the ninth, concludes this chapter with some suggestions for the main study.

3.2 Context of the Pilot Study

As discussed in Chapter 1, the present research emerged from the problem that EFL learner in Turkish public high schools are often unable to enhance their writing skills for number of reasons. According to Aydin & Bazsoz (2010), some of the possible reasons are inadequate writing instruction, exam-oriented classrooms, grammar and/or reading-based textbooks and teachers' attitudes towards EFL writing. Therefore, in order to address this problem, I designed a study, outside the classroom setting, in an FB group to encourage a sample of EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to

improve their writing skills with online creative writing activities undertaken by groups of peers with minimal teacher support.

Regarding the application of the pilot study, I found an EFL classroom in a Turkish public high school through a colleague of mine where the skill of writing is given less attention during the English language lessons. Among the thirty-four EFL learners in this classroom, I recruited two groups of three, in total six participants (aged between 16 years old). In the first group, there were three female participants (Ayse, Fatma and Su) and in the second, there were three males (Mert, Cem, and Burak).

The school is located in Izmir, the third largest city in Turkey with a population of approximately 3.7 million people. As mentioned earlier, my colleague, who has been working as a teacher of English for 15 years, showed interest in my study and agreed to be a “gatekeeper” (Creswell, 2013) to create an environment for me to present my project and to invite volunteers from among her students. As reported by my colleague, students are unable to improve their writing skills, because they only have English four hours per week and the curriculum requires teachers to teach mostly grammar and for the students to do grammar-related activities. Even though the students’ coursebook includes writing activities, there is not enough time left for these activities to be undertaken in the classroom setting and therefore, they are given them as homework. However, as recounted by colleague, most of them do not take writing homework seriously and generally, they get their parents, relatives or neighbours to do it for them.

The participants were in the 10th grade which is the second year of high school. The Ministry of National Education (MONE) (2012) has set this grade’s English level in public high schools based upon the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CERFL) as A2. The Council of Europe (2001:25) categorises A2 level language users as ‘basic users’ and describes their capabilities as follows:

They can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). They can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. They can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Concerning the skill of writing, the Council of Europe (2001) highlights that A2 level language users should be able to write simple short notes and messages in areas of immediate need. They need to be able to write a very simple personal letter, for example, thanking someone for something.

However, not all the participants' English level was the same, as the English subject exam results provided by their English teacher for the autumn 2012 term and displayed in Table 3.1 demonstrate. These exams are assessed out of 100 and they mostly assess students' grammar, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills, but with the exception of spelling, the skill of writing is not assessed. The final grading includes students' performance in the classroom and the responsibility of completing homework on time. The overall grade is assessed out of 5 and the above shows students' English grade in autumn 2012 term as printed on their report cards.

Table 3.1 Participants' autumn 2012 term exam results

	Name	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3	Final Grade	Overall Grade
Group 1	Ayse	90	83	88	85	5
	Fatma	70	62	78	80	4
	Su	45	38	47	60	2
Group 2	Mert	94	96	98	100	5
	Burak	59	47	60	57	3
	Cem	33	48	70	60	3

3.3 Ethical Considerations of the Pilot Study

In order to undertake this pilot study, I followed some official procedures.

- In late November 2012, I obtained ethical approval from King's College London's research ethics committee.

- In early December 2012, I obtained the required consent from the Provincial Directorate of National Education and from the school.

After these official procedures, on 12 December 2012, I was invited by my colleague to her classroom to present my project to her students. I spoke about it for about 20 minutes to thirty-four students and later asked for volunteers to participate in the study in pairs or groups. Among the thirty-four students, two groups of three (3 male, 3 female) students agree to take part in my pilot study. I distributed information sheets and consent forms to these six students as well as their parents. I also explained to the students that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The pilot study lasted six weeks covering the period 12 December 2012 to 24 January 2013. For ethical considerations, in this report the participants' real names are anonymised and pseudonyms are used instead. For the first group, the three girls are named Ayse, Fatma and Su and second comprising three boys were named Mert, Burak and Cem.

For the pilot study, participants were asked to produce a short story in English for four weeks in a Facebook group. For ethical considerations of the participants, 'secret group' was created for the participants. Facebook (2014) categorises FB groups into three types: 1) open (public), 2) closed, and 3) secret and regarding the first, anyone can find and join the group. Non-members can also see the members of open groups and their posts. Regarding a closed group, anyone can find this group, but they need the administrator's approval to join. Moreover, in such a group, non-members can see the members but not see their posts. With respect to a secret group, no one can find this group by a search and only, the administrator of a group can send a private invitation to join to a prospective member. Non-members cannot see the members of this group or their posts. Based on the above options, I decided that a secret group was the most suitable for the participants of the pilot study as I wanted to protect their privacy.

3.4 Aims of the Pilot Study

Aims: As mentioned earlier, I decided to undertake a pilot study to inform and shape the methodology for the main research. In this regard, I aimed to (1) determine the sample size for the main study, (2) to devise the main study's online collaborative short

story writing activity, (3) to frame focus group discussions, and (4) to firm up the research questions for the main study.

A pilot study refers to “a small scale version or trial run, done in preparation for the major study” (Polit and Beck, 2006: 467). Conducting a pilot study prior to the major research study can give additional information to the researcher such that the major study can be improved (Wiersma, 1991). In brief, as described by Vogt (1993) a pilot can be considered as a ‘dress rehearsal’ to identify any possible problems before conducting the major study.

3.5 Procedures of the Pilot Study Intervention

In relation to the procedures of the pilot study, in the first week, I met the participants three times in the school during the breaks for focus group discussions. Between the second and the fifth weeks, I implemented the pilot study. In the sixth, the final week, I held a focus group discussion with the participants and had a peer feedback session in the school during the breaks. Table 3.2 below provides an overview of the pilot study procedures.

Table 3.2: Overview of the pilot study procedures

Week	Dates	Procedures
1	12 Dec 12 – 17 Dec 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Presenting my project to a class of 34 students and inviting voluntary participants for the pilot study <input type="checkbox"/> Six participants agreed to participate in the pilot study <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 3
2	18 Dec 12 – 23 Dec 12	<u>Online Collaborative Short Story Writing Activity</u> <input type="checkbox"/> The six participants were asked to form two groups of three and then asked to attend their FB groups. <input type="checkbox"/> Each group was asked to produce a short story (minimum 300 to a maximum 600 words) in five sessions over four weeks.
3	24 Dec 12-30 Dec 12	
4	31 Dec 12- 06 Jan 13	
5	07 Jan 13 -13 Jan 13	
6	15 Jan 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Discussion 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Peer feedback session

I conducted four focus group discussions with two groups of three participants during the pilot study. All discussions were audio recorded. The first three discussions were conducted before the writing activity and the fourth was undertaken after it. All discussions took place in the school's library. The aim of the first focus group discussion was to explore participants' views about the skill of writing in English and their previous writing experiences in English. The aim of the second focus group discussion was to investigate their views about collaborative writing in English. As participants reported, they did have no previous experiences in collaborative writing in English. I decided to prepare participants for this focus group discussion. Therefore, on the same day, before the discussion, I asked participants to create two groups of three and write a short piece of creative writing on the topic of 'stress' either in prose or verse not less than 5 no more than 10 sentences in 15 minutes in the school's library. The third focus group discussion was to probe participants' views about the idea of undertaking a writing activity in English in an FB group. As participants did not produce a collaborative writing in the setting of FB group before, I decided to prepare participants for this focus group discussion. I asked participants to form two groups of three and log into their Facebook accounts. As there are four computers in the library, four participants undertook the writing activity from these computers. The other two participants used their mobile phones. I created two 'secret' groups in FB for this focus group discussion's writing activity. Once participants joined their groups, I asked participants to produce a poem / song lyrics in English in 20 minutes maximum.

The fourth focus group discussion was to investigate their interpretations about peer collaboration in the collaborative short story writing activity in a FB group. Table 3.3 provides an overview of the focus group discussions employed during the pilot study.

Table 3.3: Overview of pilot study focus group discussions

Method	Topic(s) covered	How Long?	Where?	When?
Focus group discussion 1	Individual writing in English and writing activities implemented in English lessons	40 minutes		13 Dec 2012
Focus group discussion 2	Collaborative writing in English	40 minutes		14 Dec 2012

Focus group discussion 3	The idea of undertaking a collaborative writing activity in English in an FB group	45 minutes	School's library	17 Dec 2012
Focus group discussion 4	Peer collaboration in online short story writing	49 minutes		15 Jan 2013

In terms of the pilot study's collaborative short story writing activity in a FB group, I first asked six participants to form two groups of three. In the first, there were three female participants (Ayse, Fatma and Su) and in the second, there were three males (Mert, Cem, and Burak). Following this, I asked the groups to join an FB group created for each of them and to decide upon a writing topic. Both groups decided to write a short story. Then, I asked them to produce a short story (minimum 300 to a maximum 600 words) in English by discussing only through the FB group in written form. I informed them that they were allowed to use their first language (Turkish) when discussing on FB the creation of the short story, which was to be written in English. Also, it was each group's responsibility to arrange the meeting dates and times. I attended all sessions of both groups as a facilitator. I chose not to involve myself in their discussions unless they asked me a question or sought help. The reason for this was because my research was aimed at gaining insights into the perceptions on the students engaging in peer collaboration during an online short story writing activity and if I intervened too much then the collaborative process would have impeded. By the end of the writing activity, both groups managed to produce their short stories over the four weeks. The first group held five sessions, whilst the second met four times.

A few days later on 15 January 2013, both groups completed and posted their short stories on their FB walls. I met them at the school for the peer feedback session as well as a focus group discussion. Concerning the peer feedback session, I printed out each group's writing and then I hung both scripts on the classroom wall, giving each participant 'Post-it notes' to evaluate the other group's work. After the peer evaluation, the groups read the story pertaining to them and then discussed what had been written with their evaluators. The peer feedback session lasted approximately 45 minutes and took place in the school's library. I also kept a research journal during the pilot study and based on my journal entries, I prepared the tables below (Table 3.4 and 3.5) from

my research journal entries to illustrate the overview of each group's writing processes when producing their short stories.

Table 3.4: Timeline of the first group's (Ayse, Fatma and Su) writing

Timeline				
Week	Session	Date	Duration	Descriptions
1	Session 1	22 Dec 13	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group decided to write a short story about love and horror. Ayse began to lead the group and they brainstormed some ideas about their short story.
2	Session 2	29 Dec 13	45minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayse asked Fatma and Su to draft their short story in Turkish.
3	Session 3	5 Jan13	25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ayse divided the Turkish version of the short story into three parts and allocated them to each group member. Later, she asked each member to write the story according to the allocated part.
4	Session 4	12 Jan13	45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group member posted their part of the writing on the FB wall. Ayse combined all three parts and posted them as a whole.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Then, Ayse asked Fatma and Su to identify and correct the grammar, vocabulary and spelling mistakes in the writing.
	Session 5	13 Jan 13	1 hour 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ayse asked Fatma and Su to read the story once again to see if there were any inconsistencies regarding tenses and meaning. <input type="checkbox"/> Ayse read it once again and made the necessary changes. <input type="checkbox"/> Ayse published the final version of the short story on the FB wall.

Table 3.5: Timeline of the second group's (Mert, Burak and Cem) writing

Timeline				
Week	Session	Date	Duration	Descriptions
1	Session 1	23 Dec 13	50 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group started to discuss what type of short story to write.
2	Session 2	30 Dec 13	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group finalised their decision about their short story topic. • Mert suggested they write about how three young guys became famous as a rock band. Burak and Cem agreed on Mert's suggestion.
3	Session 3	6 Jan 13	1 hour 40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mert posted the first couple of sentences of their short story and asked the other members to add to his writing. <input type="checkbox"/> The group started to write the story in a cyclical way.
4	Session 4	13 Jan 13	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group completed writing the short story. • Mert gave roles to each group member for editing the short story. <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Burak checked the correctness of vocabulary and spelling. <input type="checkbox"/> Cem checked if there were any grammar mistakes. <input type="checkbox"/> Mert checked the coherence of the short story. <input type="checkbox"/> Mert read the short story once again, made the necessary corrections and then published it on the FB wall.

In the following section, I describe the changes I made for the main study as a result of conducting the pilot study.

3.6 Amendments from the Pilot Study

As mentioned earlier, the main purpose of conducting the pilot study was to test the feasibility of the initial research design and improve the quality and efficiency of the main study methodology. I had four main aims. These were:

5. to determine sample size for the main study;
6. to devise the main study's collaborative online short story writing exercise;
7. to frame focus group discussions;
8. to firm up the research questions for the main study;

Regarding the first aim of the pilot study, I decided to undertake the main study with a sample of six participants. I found this sample size had provided very useful insights and so decided to repeat the format. To select six participants appropriately for the main study, I prepared a checklist which I explain in the following section (main study). As regards the second aim of the pilot study, as I did not have a structured framework to draw for conducting a collaborative online short story writing activity in a Turkish public high school context, I had to trial my ideas for the design to assess their appropriateness for the writing exercise in the main study. As a result of the pilot study, I was able to devise the main study's writing exercise in the light of the feedback from focus group discussions with the participants and my research journal entries. I made three amendments for the main study's writing activity.

The first concerned giving some guidance to the main study participants in terms of selecting a short story topic in prewriting stage. As reported by some of the pilot study participants, they had difficulties in deciding on a particular topic for their short story as a group and they had spent nearly two sessions before all agreeing on what they wanted to write about. Moreover, I observed that once they understood what they were asked to do at the beginning, they sought less facilitator support in later stages. In the light of this, I decided to provide a short story topic for the main study participants.

The second amendment in relation to the writing exercise was the length of the collaborative online short story writing activity. As aforementioned, in the pilot study, the activity lasted four weeks. For the main study, in order to give participants more time to discuss and collaborate among one another, I decided to allocate seven weeks for the exercise. The third change was regarding the peer feedback session. As I mentioned earlier, this session took place in a classroom setting rather than online. It might have been difficult for me to conduct the session in the classroom setting since I did not want students to miss their lessons. Instead, I decided this could be conducted in a new FB group that would include all six participants. To summarise, I decided that the

main study's writing activity would be undertaken over seven weeks with two groups of three participants in an FB group including peer session at the end.

Returning to the aims of the pilot study, the third was about holding focus group discussions before the main study, helped me considerably in terms of learning how to evaluate participants' opinions and suggestions about the set writing activity. Thus, by the end of the pilot study, I felt much more confident about conducting focus group discussions and consequently, was of the opinion that I would be more skilled at running them during the main study. I observed that some of the pilot study participants could not or did not want to express their opinions or feelings openly in front their friends. In fact, some of them chose to do so by sending private messages or chat requests through FB. Taking this into account, I decided to employ online one- to-one chats as well as focus group discussions for the main study. On top of this, having considered that depending on participants' narratives, these may not be sufficient, I therefore planned to use the participants' online discussion boards in their FB groups for the main study to further ensure the credibility of data. To summarise, the key data collection tools in the main study would be focus group discussions, online one-to-one chats and online discussion boards.

The fourth aim of the pilot study was about firming up the research questions for the main study. Without specific and clear research questions, a study may be unfocused and the researcher is likely to be unsure about what it is about and what it is for (Bryman, 2008). As explained earlier, the general purpose of this study was to investigate how to encourage EFL learners in a Turkish high school to improve their writing development through peer collaboration in an online short story writing exercise. I conducted the pilot study to identify clear research questions for guiding the main investigation appropriately and this led to the following being put.

1. How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
2. What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:121) highlighted that qualitative analysis is a “... non mathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of people’s words and actions.” Qualitative data sets are mostly in prose in the form of field notes, interview transcripts and documents (Bryman, 2008). This pilot study’s qualitative data sets comprised the discussion transcripts.

Silverman (2011) listed a number of analytic approaches in qualitative analysis, such as framework analysis, thematic analysis, interpretive phonological analysis and constructivist grounded theory. The focus group discussion transcripts collected for the pilot study were analysed using thematic analysis, as it is the most common mode employed for this type of data set, according to Silverman, (2004). Moreover, thematic analysis was deemed to fit in my research methodology because no such intervention has been conducted in this context previously. That is, as there was no particular framework to start from, thematic analysis helped me identify key themes emerging from the focus group discussion transcripts. Also, thematic analysis which is a process for encoding qualitative information is generally used in the early stages of the research inquiry process, such as the pilot stage, (Boyatzis, 1998) and thus was best suited for this stage of my research.

Analysis of the focus group discussion transcripts involved following a number of steps. First, the three classroom-based focus group discussion recordings were transcribed as a Microsoft Word document in Turkish. Also, the online text-based focus group discussion recording was transferred to such a document. Then, before moving on to coding the discussion transcripts, each was read several times so I could become familiarised with its content. I highlighted the key elements like words, sentences or quotes which could relate to understanding the topic and addressing to the investigation of each transcript. Third, initial codes were generated through inductive (open) coding, which involved giving meaningful codes to each segment of the discussion transcript. In order to organise the codes effectively, I gave each code a letter and Table 3.6 shows the coding procedure.

Table 3.6 Coding Procedure

Lines	Focus group discussion 1 transcript
1	Moderator (Hasan): Well, you have just finished producing a piece of
2	Individual writing in English. How did you find the writing activity? Please
3	explain it with reason(s) as well.
4	Ayse: Actually, it wasn't a difficult activity overall. (A) However, at the
5	beginning I felt unsure whilst producing my paragraph and so I found the
6	activity a little bit difficult. (B)
7	Moderator: Why did you feel unsure?
8	Ayse: You just asked us to write a paragraph but I expected you to give us a
9	sample paragraph. (C)
10	Cem: I agree with Ayse. I expected you to give us more detailed instructions
11	before the activity. At least you could have given the first one or two
12	sentence(s).....
12	Our English teacher never gives us this kind of writing activities. (C)
13	Compared to the activities I'm used to be doing in English lessons.
14	This [activity] made us think a lot and produce original English sentences. (A)

A. The activity is doable

B. Difficulties encountered during the writing activity

C. Seeking support

The aim was to group the codes with the same or similar letters. Fourth, I tried to cluster and organise the open codes and search for preliminary themes that described the data. I then identified more major themes which could be linked to the investigation of the transcript. Finally, once the final themes were identified, before presenting them, illuminative quotations from the transcripts were translated into English in order to present and discuss the findings as well as for the consideration of how to conduct the main study.

3.7 Findings of the Pilot Study

3.7.1 Findings from the focus group discussion 1

The aim of the focus group discussion 1 was to investigate the six participants' (EFL learners') views about the skill of writing in English and their previous writing experiences in English. This focus group discussion lasted forty minutes and took place in a classroom setting. As explained earlier (see section 3.6), the discussion transcript was analysed by using inductive coding and thematic analysis. The first iteration of the coding elicited a range of codes about participants' views on the skill of writing in

English and their previous experiences during writing in English, which were later grouped and analysed further before finally being categorised into three themes:

- **Difficulties of individual writing:** This theme relates to the issues participants encountered during the process of writing in English
- **L1 influence:** This theme relates to the influence of L1 (first language) on producing a piece of writing in English individually
- **Support obtained during the individual writing process:** This theme relates to the types of support the participants' obtained during the individual writing.

Difficulties of individual writing

The theme, 'difficulties of individual writing' was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes; 1) difficulties in organising and reflecting ideas in EFL writing due to lack of linguistic competence, and 2) lack of a sample text. Table 3.7 displays an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of difficulties of individual writing.

Table 3.7 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of difficulties of individual writing

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Difficulties of individual writing	Difficulties of organising and reflecting ideas in EFL writing due to the participants' lack of linguistic competence	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about the difficulties of organising and reflecting ideas in EFL writing due to their lack of linguistic competence.
	Lack of a sample text	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about the difficulties of individual writing due to the lack of a sample text to guide their writing process.

All the participants attended the focus group discussion 1 and five of these stated they found individual writing in English difficult. Table 3.8 provides an overview of these five participants' difficulties in this individual writing activity.

Table 3.8 Overview of participants' difficulties in individual writing activity

Types of Difficulty	Number of participants commented
Organising and reflecting ideas in English due to the participants' lack of linguistic competence	3
Lack of a sample text	2

Three out of these five participants who found individual writing difficult expressed that they had difficulty in organising and reflecting their ideas in English due to their lack of linguistic competence. For example,

Burak said, *"I know I have creative ideas but as I haven't got enough English, I have difficulty in making English sentences and can't express what I want to say in this language [English]."*

Another participant, Fatma, reflected, *"[...] when it comes to writing in English I have to think a lot in terms of making meaningful sentences and finding the right words."*

Su stated, *"Generally, I get my elder sister to do my English assignments....I don't trust my English as I am not good at tenses [i.e. the simple present and past tense] and poor in vocabulary."*

Two out of the five participants who found individual writing in English difficult explained that they expected a sample text to guide their writing process.

Ayse recounted, *"Generally, our teacher of English gives writing exercises and I didn't know what the expected writing from us looks like."*

Cem reflected, *"I usually want to see an example writing as this example writing made me think a lot and produce original English sentences."*

In brief, all six participants attended the focus group discussion 1 and five of these recounted that they faced some difficulties during the individual writing process. Three

of these explained the reason for their difficulty as being organising and reflecting ideas in EFL writing, due to their lack of linguistic competence. Whilst the other two expressed that their difficulty in individual writing was because of the lack of a sample text to guide their writing process.

L1 Influence

The theme ‘L1 influence’ was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes; 1) translation, and 2) L1 use in the before writing stage. The table below gives an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of L1 influence.

Table 3.9 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of L1 influence

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
L1 influence	Translation	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments about converting messages from L1 to EFL during the individual writing process.
	L1 use in the before writing stage	This sub-theme refers to students’ comments about L1 use in the planning stage of individual writing.

All six participants responded that they wrote in English with the help of their first language (L1). However, not all six followed the same way in the course of correlating with L1 and Table 3.10 gives an overview of the ways that they used L1 during the individual writing process in English.

Table 3.10 Overview of the ways of using L1 during the individual EFL writing process

Ways of using L1 during the individual writing process	Number of participants commented
Translation	4
L1 use in the before writing stage	2

As shown in the table above, the participants explained how they used L1 during the individual writing process in English in two ways; 1) translation, and 2) using L1 in the before writing stage. Those using L1 through translation during the individual writing process explained this as follows.

Su described, *“I first try to write my sentences in Turkish and then translate them into English.*

Burak preferred to write in Turkish first and have it translated into English through Google Translate.

Burak recounted, *“I always use Google Translate when I need to write in English. I write my paragraphs in Turkish there and then get it translated... easy way of writing in English. Also, I correct a few mistakes and changed a couple of words in the translated version,”*

Ayşe said, *“I scribble a few ideas in Turkish and then starting from these I try to produce my writing in English.”*

To summarise, as recounted by the six participants, all produce writing in English with the help of their L1. As I understood from participants' contributions, translation is one of the common ways of using L1 during the individual EFL writing process. However, as explained by some of the participants L1 was used before the writing stage to organise and conceptualise ideas.

Support obtained during individual writing

The theme ‘support obtained during individual writing’ was created inductively from grouping the following three sub-themes: 1) seeking the teacher's support 2) peer support and 3) self-directed. Table 3.11 shows an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of support obtained during individual writing.

Table 3.11 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of support obtained during individual writing

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Support obtained during individual writing	Seeking the facilitator's support	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about seeking the facilitator's support during the individual writing process.
	Peer support	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about the ways they obtained peer support during the individual writing process.
	Self-directed	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about how they produced a piece of writing in English without any teacher or peer support

When asked what kind of support they feel the need of obtaining support when producing writing in English, four out of the six participants indicated that they would like to have their teacher's support. Yet, two out of these four stated that they sometimes prefer to receive peer support, whilst two reported that they mostly prefer to write in English without any teacher and peer support. However, two of the latter recounted they obtained some support from their smartphone dictionary or from the Internet.

3.12 Overview of the type of support the participants obtained during the individual writing activity

Type of support	Number of participants commented
Facilitator support	4
Peer support	2
Self-directed	2

Fatma explained, "*Ayşe has a large vocabulary in English so I sometimes ask her when I wanted to find out the English meanings of the words I am looking for when writing in English.*"

However, unlike his friends, Mert said, *“I can’t write in English myself without being in need of teacher’s or friend’s support but I can check the words I’m looking for from my phone’s dictionary...”*

Cem commented, *“I expect my English teacher to give us more detailed instructions before the activity.... I mostly write in English myself and sometimes I use my smartphone to access the Internet to get some help.”*

In short, as explained by some of the participants, they first sought the teacher’s support. However, when it became clear this was not available, they either obtained support from their peers or wrote their paragraphs themselves with any peer support that was available. Some of the participants who did not receive peer support explained that they obtained some help from their smartphone dictionary or from the Internet.

Conclusion

To conclude, the six EFL learners’ views about individual writing was characterised based on their self-reflections from the discussion transcript under the following three themes: 1) difficulties of individual writing, 2) L1 influence, and 3) support obtained during individual writing. Table 3.13 summarises their views about the activity.

Table 3.13 Summary of the findings of the six EFL learners’ views about individual writing

Themes	Sub-themes		
Difficulties of individual writing	Difficulty of organising and reflection ideas in EFL writing due to lack of linguistic competence	Lack of a sample text	
L1 influence	Translation	L1 use in the before writing stage	
Support obtained during individual writing	Seeking facilitator’s support	Peer support	Self-directed

Most of the participants indicated that they faced some difficulties during the individual writing process. Based on the participants’ accounts, the difficulties of individual

writing were categorised in the following two themes 1) difficulty of organising and reflection ideas in EFL writing due to lack of linguistic competence, and 2) lack of a sample text to guide them in the writing process.

All six participants explained that they generally produce writing in English with the help of their L1. Based on their reporting, translation was identified as one of the common ways of using L1 during the individual EFL writing process. Yet, as explained by some of the participants L1 was also used in the planning stage of the individual writing to organise and conceptualise ideas. Further, some of them stated that they seek facilitator's support during writing in English. However, some participants commented that they prefer to obtain help from their peers or write their paragraphs themselves without any peer assistance. Some of those who never seek peer support explained that they obtain support from their smartphone dictionary or from the Internet.

3.7.2 Findings from focus group discussion transcript 2

The aim of the focus group discussion 2 was to investigate the six participants' (EFL learners') views about collaborative writing in English. This focus group discussion lasted forty minutes and took place in the school's library. As participants reported, they did not have previous experience in collaborative writing in English. Hence, I decided to prepare participants for this focus group discussion. On the same day, before the discussion, I asked participants to create two groups of three and write a short piece of creative writing on the topic of 'stress' either in prose or verse not less than 5 no more than 10 sentences in 15 minutes in the school's library.

As explained earlier (see section 3.6), the discussion transcript was analysed by using inductive coding and thematic analysis. The first iteration of the coding elicited a range of codes about participants' experiences during the individual writing, which were later grouped and analysed further before finally being categorised into two themes:

- **Overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing:** This theme relates to the writing strategies participants developed to overcome difficulties in the collaborative writing process.
- **Advantages & disadvantages of collaborative writing:** This theme covers their views about the advantages and disadvantages of collaborative writing

Overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing

The theme ‘overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing’ was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) difficulties of collaborative writing, and 2) developing writing strategies to overcome the difficulties of the collaborative writing process. Table 3.13 provides an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.13 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing	Difficulties of collaborative writing	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments about difficulties they faced during the collaborative writing process.
	Developing writing strategies	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments about how in their groups they developed writing strategies to overcome the difficulties of collaborative writing.

All six participants attended the focus group discussion 2 and all reflected that they encountered some difficulties at the beginning of the activity. However, then they all reported that they managed to produce a short piece of writing in their groups of three by the end of the activity. When asked to give reasons of their difficulties, all stated it was their first time in undertaking a collaborative writing activity. Some of them added other obstacles, including the lack of writing instructions during the activity and the lack of the facilitator’s support. However, as they explained, they developed some writing strategies collectively to overcome the difficulties of collaborative writing. Participants described their writing strategies as producing a text collectively at the same time. In this type of writing, participants highlighted that they helped one another while producing a text collaboratively. Table 3.14 displays an overview of the overcoming difficulties of collaborative writing.

Table 3.14 Overview of overcoming difficulties of collaborative writing

Overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing	Number of participants commented
Difficulties of collaborative writing	6
Developing writing strategies	6

As described by Ayse, her group's main difficulty was due to the lack of writing instructions provided by the facilitator before the activity.

Ayse stated, "We weren't told or showed how to do collaborative writing before the activity... we were only asked to write a piece of writing collaboratively..."

Fatma added to Ayşe's comment by saying, "as a group (Ayse, Su and herself), we had some difficulties at the beginning because as Ayse said we weren't told how to write it collaboratively. I suggested that Ayse should write a few sentences first because her English is better than ours and then in turns Su and I could add on our writing, but Ayse didn't like the idea so we decided to produce it all together at the same time."

Fatma explained her group developed a collaborative writing strategy, whereby ".....first, Su generated ideas in Turkish, then Ayse tried to translate them into English and in the meantime I helped Ayse to find the unknown words from my phone's dictionary....After Ayse produced the sentences in English, Su and I edited them.... In this way, we could produce a short piece of writing collaboratively."

The other group (Mert, Cem and Burak) reported that they were not sure how to produce a piece of writing collaboratively at the beginning of the activity. Yet, Cem volunteered that his group managed to write it with the help of Mert's guidance

Cem explained, *“Well we were thinking of how to write it collaboratively and Mert suggested writing a poem line by line so that we all could contribute to this writing... After that, we could write it easily.”*

Mert recounted *“I think it is a bit difficult to produce a collaborative text. However, when it comes to poem writing, it becomes a little bit less difficult as it is imaginative writing and you’re not giving specific information to the reader. Instead, you’re just expressing your feelings...”*

Mert also described the way in which his group developed a collaborative writing strategy as *“We decided to write a poem and write it all together at the same time.... First, we discussed what to include in our poem. Burak wrote down our ideas in Turkish on a paper. Our group discussion took around eight minutes. After that based on our ideas, we tried to produce sentences in English. We focused on the ideas, grammar and vocabulary while producing our lines. By the end of the activity, we managed to produce five lines.”*

In brief, the participants stated they faced some difficulties at the beginning of collaborative writing activity because it was their first time that they had been asked to produce a piece of writing collaboratively. Some of them also reported other difficulties, such as lack of writing instructions provided by the facilitator during the activity and the absence of the facilitator’s support. However, all six recounted that their groups managed to produce a piece collaborative writing by the end of the activity. They also shared that they developed some writing strategies to overcome the difficulties of collaborative writing. Based on participants’ self-reflections, both groups’ writing strategy was producing a text collectively at the same time. Moreover, they explained regarding the writing strategies they employed that they helped out one another during the collaborative writing process and therefore managed to produce their text as group.

Advantages & disadvantages of collaborative writing

The theme ‘overcoming the difficulty in collaborative writing’ was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) advantages of collaborative writing, and 2) disadvantages of collaborative writing. Table 3.15 gives an overview of the sub-

themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.15 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of advantages and disadvantages collaborative writing activity

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Advantages & disadvantages of collaborative writing	Advantages of collaborative writing	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments on the advantages of individual writing.
	Disadvantages of collaborative writing	This sub-theme refers to the participants' views on the disadvantages of collaborative writing

All six participants attested to the advantages of collaborative writing, but some also raised disadvantages. Table 3.16 illustrates number of the participants who commented on the advantages or disadvantages of collaborative writing.

Table 3.16 Number of participants who commented on the advantages or disadvantages of collaborative writing

Advantages & disadvantages of collaborative writing	Number of participants commented
Advantages of collaborative writing	6
Disadvantages of collaborative writing	3

The advantages of collaborative writing were reported as follows.

Cem explained, “*My teacher [addressing the researcher and facilitator], three of us [Mert, Burak and himself] are very close friends. We have known each other since we were little kids. We always help one another when one of us has a problem. In this activity, we enjoyed doing it because we could support one another and produce a poem in English all together.*”

Burak added, “*Normally when it comes to assignments, we never help each other [laughter]... we are rather lazy students. However, this time, we managed*

to write a piece of writing collaboratively because there was a fun element in the activity..... I believe such activities can help us support one another and improve our writing in English... ”

Regarding the other group [Ayse, Fatma and Su], Fatma commented, *“even though at the beginning we struggled to produce writing collaboratively, as we wrote, we realised that we had started to help each other and produced sentences in English during the activity..... I personally learnt new vocabulary.... I always believe union makes strength and I think this activity is better than the previous one [individual writing].*

Su stated *“In my opinion, collaborative writing makes you feel that you are not alone during the writing process therefore, I enjoyed doing this activity.”*

On the other hand, some of the participants raised possible disadvantages of collaborative writing. For example,

Ayse stated, *“Well it is useful as you are not alone while writing. Yet, when it comes to assessment for this writing, how will a teacher assess this writing? Personally, I don’t think such kind of writing should be assessed...Such activities can be used for assignments to learn vocabulary and grammar collaboratively but not for assessment...”*

Fatma recounted, *“.....everybody has different opinions and the difficulty is to decide which one to use or not to use. I suggested that living in an urban city is stressful but for Ayse, exams are stressful... it is a bit hard to compromise and put all of our opinions into our writing.”*

In short, based on participants’ accounts, most of them preferred collaborative writing to individual writing, because the latter enabled them to help and support one another by producing sentences in English collectively. Whereas, other students highlighted some disadvantages of collaborative writing as the difficulty of assessing it and problem of reaching a consensus through negotiation during the activity, which wasted time.

Conclusion

To conclude, the six EFL learners' views about collaborative writing activity was characterised based on their self-reflections from the discussion transcript within the two following themes; 1) overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing, and 2) advantages & disadvantages of collaborative writing. Table 3.17 summarises the findings of their views about this activity.

3.17 Summary of the findings of the six EFL learners' views about collaborative writing

Themes	Sub-themes	
Overcoming difficulties in collaborative writing	Difficulties of collaborative writing	Developing writing strategies
Advantages & disadvantages of collaborative writing	Advantages of collaborative writing	Disadvantages of collaborative writing

As indicated in the above table, participants had some difficulties during the activity, with the main one being that this was their first experience of producing a piece of writing in English collaboratively. Other difficulties that the participants reported were the lack of writing instructions provided by the facilitator during the activity and the absence of any input from the facilitator. To counter these difficulties, they explained that they developed some writing strategies in order to complete the task successfully. In particular, based on the participants' self-reflections, it emerged that both groups decided to produce their text in unison. Participants explained they helped out one another during collaborative writing process and therefore they managed to produce a text all together.

Based on participants' accounts, I summarised the advantages of collaborative writing as 1) helping out one another during collaborative writing facilitates the writing process and, 2) peer support during such an activity motivates the participants, for it makes them feel that they are not on their own. Regarding the disadvantages,

I summarised the disadvantages of collaborative writing as 1) assessment of collaborative writing is difficult, and 2) reaching consensus through negotiation during such an exercise can be problematic.

3.7.3 Findings from focus group discussion 3

The aim of the focus group discussion 3 was to probe the six participants' (EFL learners') views about the idea of undertaking collaborative writing activity in English in a FB group.

This focus group discussion lasted forty-five minutes and took place in a classroom setting.

As participants did not produce a collaborative writing in the setting of FB group before, I decided to prepare participants for this focus group discussion. I asked participants to form two groups of three and log into their Facebook accounts. As there are four computers in the library, four participants undertook the writing activity from these computers. The other two participants used their mobile phones. I created two 'secret' groups in FB for this focus group discussion's writing activity. Once participants joined their groups, I asked participants to produce a poem / song lyrics in English in 20 minutes maximum.

As explained earlier (see section 3.6), the discussion transcript was analysed by using inductive coding and thematic analysis. The first iteration of the coding elicited a range of codes about participants' experiences during the individual writing, which were later grouped and analysed further before finally being categorised into four themes:

- **Convenience and flexibility:** This theme relates to the convenience and flexibility of Facebook group as a medium to do collaborative writing.
- **Collaborative writing in an FB group:** This theme refers to the participants' views about undertaking collaborative writing in an FB group.
- **Technical aspects:** This theme is in relation to the participants' views about technical aspects when doing collaborative writing in an FB group.
- **Written discussion versus face-to-face discussion:** This theme covers the participants' views on written as compared with face-to-face discussion when producing collaborative writing in an FB group.

Convenience and flexibility

The theme ‘convenience and flexibility’ was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) convenience, and 2) flexibility. Table 3.18 shows an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.18 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of convenience and flexibility

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Convenience & flexibility	Convenience	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments about the convenience of an FB group as a medium for undertaking collaborative writing.
	Flexibility	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments about the flexibility of an FB group as a medium for producing collaborative writing.

In the discussion, most of the participants recounted the convenience and some others commented on the flexibility of undertaking the collaborative writing activity in an FB group. Table 3.19 shows the numbers that commented on the convenience or flexibility of such an approach.

Table 3.19 The number of participants who commented on the convenience or flexibility of an FB group to perform collaborative writing

Convenience & Flexibility	Number of participants who commented
Convenience	5
Flexibility	3

The participants reported the convenience of the FB group as a medium to doing collaborative writing in the following ways.

Ayse stated, *“I found this activity more convenient than other [individual writing] because while doing the activity, I was at home, in front of my laptop, on Facebook and doing the activity with my friends and at the same time listening to music.* Burak added, *“I found this activity rather more convenient than the previous activities carried out in the classroom setting, because this week we could attend the activity anywhere as long as we have the Internet access. For example, while doing the activity with my friends on Facebook, I was in my grandparents’ house. I both visited them and attended the activity...”*

In regards to the flexibility of the FB group as a medium to undertake a collaborative writing Burak said *“7/24 we could access Facebook and ask questions of one another...”* Fatma commented *“when doing a collaborative activity in a classroom setting, we felt we were racing with time whereas when doing the same activity in an FB group, we felt we were more flexible in terms of time...”*

In short, most of the participants commented that they found the FB group as a medium for carrying out collaborative writing convenient, because they could do the activity with their friends online and they could attend the group anywhere they wished as long as they could access the Internet to discuss with their peers or perform the writing activities. Also, as explained by the students, when doing that week’s activity (collaborative writing), they found the FB group more flexible in terms of time.

Collaborative writing in an FB group

The theme ‘collaborative writing activity in a FB group’ was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) student-centred writing and the 2) fun element. The table below provides overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.20 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of collaborative writing in an FB group

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Collaborative writing in an FB group	Student-centred writing	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about the need for student-centred writing when implementing collaborative writing activities in an FB group.
	Fun element	This sub-theme pertains to the participants' comments about the need for a fun element when implementing collaborative writing in an FB group.

All the participants agreed that collaborative writing activities could be implemented in an FB group and five suggested that these should be designed and implemented by themselves. Moreover, three participants proffered that there should be a fun element when implementing such a procedure. The table below shows the number of participants who commented on student centred writing or the fun element when undertaking this form of group work.

Table 3.21 Number of participants who commented on collaborative writing in an FB group

Collaborative writing in an FB group	Number of participants who commented
Student-centred writing	5
Fun element	3

Most participants put forward that collaborative writing activities on Facebook should be arranged in accordance with their own decisions. For example, Burak stated, “*We can always do the writing activities on Facebook as long we design and decide when to meet.... Our parents always tell us what to do at home and so do our teachers at school... Social networking sites are the only places that we can breathe so we want to be the decision-makers if we do something for learning purposes.*”

Ayse also highlighted the importance of a fun element while doing collaborative writing activities on Facebook. “*As students, we seek for fun while learning. For instance, my private tutor is teaching me English through games and songs... I enjoy*

learning English that way. There are also online games for learning and practising English. I sometimes do these. If you're planning to use Facebook as a place for doing such writing activities, I think you should also think about the fun element. If you're just giving the activities as assignments, I don't think that students can do it there..."

In short, as recounted by the participants, collaborative writing activities can be implemented in an FB group. However, most suggested that such activities should be designed and implemented by students rather than a teacher. Some also added that a fun element should be included when undertaking such work.

Technical aspects

The theme 'technical aspects' was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) electronic devices, and 2) technical problems. Table 3.22 shows an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.22 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of technical aspects

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Technical aspects	Electronic devices	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about what kind of electronic devices they used when undertaking a collaborative writing activity in an FB group.
	Technical problems	This sub-theme pertains to the participants' comments about the technical problems they faced when undertaking a collaborative writing activity in an FB group.

Four (Ayse, Su, Fatma and Cem) of the participants reported that they logged into FB through their laptops and the other two (Mert and Burak) said they did so through their smartphones. Most of those who logged into FB through their laptops reflected that they did not encounter any technical problem when undertaking the activity, but those who used their smartphones said they had some problems gaining access.

For example, Burak said, *“I had difficulty in following the discussion on the FB wall due to the size of my phone’s screen...”*

Table 3.23 The number of participants who commented on technical aspects

Technical aspects	Number of participants who commented
Electronic devices	6
Technical problems	2

In summary, most of the students used their laptops to log on to the FB group to do that week’s activity, whereas as couple said they used their smartphones. Those who used their smartphones also reflected that they had some technical difficulties, such as following the discussion on the FB wall due to their size of their phone’s screen.

Written versus face-to-face discussion

The theme ‘written versus face-to-face discussion’ was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) written discussion, and 2) face-to-face discussion. Table 3.24 provides an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.24 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of written versus face-to-face discussion

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Written versus face-to-face discussion	Written discussion	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments about written discussion in the FB group to produce collaborative writing.
	Face-to-face discussion	This sub-theme pertains to the participants’ comments about face-to-face discussion in the FB group to produce collaborative writing.

Each group of participants undertook the activity that was allocated to them and the discussion in the FB group was carried out on the “Facebook Wall” in written form. During the interview, most commented that they were happy with the written discussion during the activity, but some reflected that they preferred face-to-face contact. The table below shows the number of participants who commented on written or face-to-face discussion when producing a piece of writing collaboratively in an FB group.

Table 3.25 Number of participants who commented on written or face-to-face discussion

Written discussion versus face-to-face discussion	Number of participants commented
Written discussion	5
Face-to-face discussion	3

As reported above, some of the students stated that they preferred face-to-face discussion when undertaking this collaborative writing activity. Regarding this, Su said, “... *I find written discussion time consuming, we should either meet on SKYPE or in the classroom to discuss what to write and then we can produce our writing on the Facebook wall.*” Whilst Cem recounted, “*I prefer face-to-face discussion more than written discussion. Sometimes explaining things in a written way takes time and can be boring.*”

In brief, written discussion versus face-to-face discussion emerged by grouping two sub-themes: written discussion and face-to-face discussion. Most of the participants said they were content with the former when producing a piece of collaborative writing in an FB group. However, some participants stated they wanted to use face-to-face discussion during the activity, because they found the written form to be time consuming.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the six EFL learners’ views about views about a FB group as a medium to undertake collaborative writing was characterised based on their self-reflections from the discussion transcript within the four following themes: 1) convenience and

flexibility, 2) collaborative writing in an FB group, 3) technical aspects, and 4) written discussion versus face-to-face discussion. The table below summarises the findings of six EFL learners' views about using an FB group as the medium for carrying out such activities.

3.26 Summary of the findings of six EFL learners' views about using an FB group as a medium to undertake collaborative writing

Themes	Sub-themes	
Convenience & Flexibility	Convenience	Flexibility
Collaborative writing in a FB group	Student-centred writing	Fun element
Technical aspects	Electronic devices	Technical problems
Written versus face-to-face discussion	Written discussion	Face-to-face discussion

Elaborating upon the table above, based on the participants' self-reflections, it emerged that they found the FB group as a medium for carrying out collaborative writing convenient, because they could undertake the activity with their friends online and in addition, they could attend FB group anywhere they wished to so long as they could access the Internet to discuss with their peers or perform the writing activities. Also, as explained by the participants, when doing that week's activity (collaborative writing), they found the FB group more flexible in terms of time.

As recounted by the participants, collaborative writing activities can be implemented in an FB group. However, most of the participants suggested that such activities should be designed and implemented by the students themselves rather than a teacher. Some also suggested that a fun element should be included when implementing such tasks in an FB group. Moreover, most of the participants stated they used their laptops to log into the FB group to do that week's activity, but reported that they had used their smartphones. Those who did so also reflected that they had some technical difficulties, such as following the discussion on the FB wall due to their size of their phone's screen. Most of the students said they were happy with the written discussion when producing collaborative writing in an FB group. However, some of the commented

that they found the written discussion time consuming, opining that there should be face-to-face discussion either in the classroom or in an online setting.

3.7.4 Findings from focus group discussion 4

The aim of this focus group discussion was to investigate the six participants' (EFL learners') interpretations of peer collaboration during collaborative short story writing activity in a FB group. This focus group discussion lasted 49 minutes and took place in the school's library. This focus group discussion transcript was analysed by using inductive coding and thematic analysis. The first iteration of the coding elicited a range of codes about the six EFL learners' experiences regarding they described peer collaboration while producing their group's piece of short story in English over the four weeks in a FB group. These codes were grouped and then analysed further and finally categorised into three themes. These themes were:

- **Peer Instruction:** This theme relates to the participants' comments about the use of peer instruction among the groups during the four-week online creative writing activity.
- **Peer feedback:** This theme pertains to the participants' comments about the use of peer feedback among the groups during the four-week online creative writing activity.
- **Peer emotional support:** This theme refers to the participants' comments about the use of peer emotional support among the groups during the four-week online creative writing activity.

Peer Instruction

The theme, 'peer instruction' was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) group members' views about peer instruction 2) peer-teacher's views about peer instruction. Table 3.27 gives an overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.27 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of peer instruction

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Peer instruction	Group members' comments about peer instruction	This sub-theme refers to the participants' comments about peer instruction.
	Peer-teachers' comments about peer instruction	This sub-theme refers to the comments of the participants who were peer-teachers during this activity

Some of the participants recounted that group members felt the need of a teacher to guide and instruct them during the activity and therefore, they chose a teacher among their group. The following quotations from the participants, first, portray the group members' views about peer instruction and subsequently there are contributions regarding how the peer-teachers felt about peer instruction during the activity. Table 3.28 illustrates the number of participants who commented on the use of peer instruction when producing a piece of creative writing in groups in an FB group over four weeks.

Table 3.28 The number of participants who commented on peer instruction

Peer instruction	Number of participants commented
Group members' views about peer instruction	4
Peer-teachers' views about peer instruction	2

In relation to the girls' group (Ayse, Fatma and Su), Fatma said, "... *We decided one of us has to be our teacher. We chose Ayse for this role because her English is better than ours. During the four weeks Ayse planned the meeting dates and times and decided on how we were going to write collaboratively.*"

One of the boys' group (Mert, Cem and Burak), Burak, explained, "*We always believe in group work. As you know we have a band. [Cem is the singer, Mert is the drummer and Burak is the guitarist] We also undertake collaborative work with our band. We support Cem as a singer with our*

instruments to make music..... In this activity, we felt the need of somebody to lead us during the four weeks....Let's call this person, a conductor, a group leader or as Fatma named it as teacher.... Our group selected Mert as our conductor. The reason was because he is interested in this type of [creative] writing. He is the poet of our group....”

Cem contended that there should be a teacher in the group and justified this by saying, *“I think such student-led activities with little teacher's control can't be successful because all the participants will be students and they'll probably end up doing nothing except discussing what to write. However, if there was somebody to lead them, they could do it. [...] Mert was our leader and he told us what to do. From time to time, I was against his decisions but he found a way to compromise. I respected him and followed his guidance.”*

During the interview, group leaders were asked how they felt assisting and guiding a group.

Ayşe shared, *“I'm taking private English lessons outside the school. Maybe my friends [Fatma and Su] think my English is better than them, but actually they are also interested in learning English. In this activity, I'm glad that my friends selected me as a teacher of the group [...]. As the teacher of the group, I aimed at balancing the group dynamics because even though we are close friends, we have different ideas and opinions when writing collaboratively. Our opinions may conflict with one another's. Therefore, collaborative writing is a tricky type of writing. If you're writing with people you don't like or don't get along with, you may never complete this writing. However, as a group, we could maintain collaborative writing successfully. However, having said that, none of us wrote what we really wanted to write. For example, Su wanted to write a love story, whereas Fatma wanted to write a horror story. Yet, we discussed this amongst us and tried to find solutions about how to merge both friends' wishes.”*

Mert described how, “[...] *I sometimes write song lyrics for our band. Also I attempted to write in English earlier. Burak and Cem are also interested in English. They listen to English songs and they have a large vocabulary. In this activity, they chose me as their leader because I’m interested in writing. Yet, I didn’t see myself as a leader. I just guided them and we produced a short story all together. I also noticed my friends’ strengths in English. As I mentioned earlier, Burak and Cem know a good amount of vocabulary in English and I know English grammar well so we both merged our strengths and produced better writing.*”

In brief, the theme ‘peer instruction’ emerged from two sub-themes. The first was about the group members’ comments regarding peer instruction, whilst the second sub-theme was concerned with the peer-teachers’ comments about peer instruction.

Peer Feedback

The theme, ‘peer feedback’ was created inductively from grouping the following two sub-themes: 1) peer feedback in while writing, and 2) peer feedback in after writing. Table 3.29 shows the overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.29 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of peer feedback

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Peer feedback	Peer feedback in while writing	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments on giving and receiving feedback in the while writing stage.
	Peer feedback in after writing	This sub-theme pertains to the participants’ comments on giving and receiving feedback in the after writing stage.

During the discussion, most of the students commented on giving and receiving peer feedback. However, as became apparent from their comments, such feedback occurred during different stages of the writing process. As recounted by the participants, first,

peer-feedback occurred in the while writing stage, when they were producing their creative writing with their FB group and it also occurred during the after writing stage when they evaluated each other's writing. Table 3.30 shows the number of participants who commented on peer feedback.

Table 3.30 Number of participants commented on peer feedback

Peer feedback	Number of participants commented
Peer feedback in while writing	5
Peer feedback in after writing	4

Regarding the participants' views on peer feedback in the while writing stage, Su said, *"I found the editing session with friends very useful, because I learnt how to use words in the right place, spell words correctly and how to put my knowledge about tenses into practice when I discussed these with Fatma and Ayse."*

Fatma stated, *"[...] when I write in English individually, I always feel that I'm going to make lots of mistakes and my teacher will underline each of my sentences in red and make lots of corrections. However, in this activity, when we were producing our parts, we also wrote it individually. Yet, in spite of my previous experiences, I was able to write in English this time because I knew that Ayse and Su would help me when we met to discuss our writing bits."*

Burak commented, *"[...] producing a story is important but the more important thing is learning something during this process. I think in this activity, we learnt from one another by providing comments from our writings. These made the story read well."*

Some participants, for example Mert and Ayse, commented on giving feedback to their friends.

Ayse said, *“As a teacher, you should work harder than your students. [...] While giving my comments on Fatma’s and Ayse’s writing bits, I felt that I have to give them correct and useful comments to make their writings better. Therefore, I did some search on the net when I wasn’t sure about the correctness of a sentence. I also got help from my private tutor to help my friends.”*

Mert explained, *“I thought a lot on how we could write a story collaboratively and came up with this [cycle writing] strategy.... This way we could both produce a story in turns and evaluate each other’s writing bits...”*

As regards to the participants’ views on peer feedback in after writing stage, Burak reflected, *“I found it helpful to receive feedback from members of the other group. Within the group, we may not always be able to notice the weaknesses of our writing. Our friends can notice and highlight our weaknesses in writing from an outsider’s point of view.”*

Mert commented, *“By the end of this activity, I’ve realised that writing is no longer an individual activity... I think receiving feedback from friends makes you feel that you are not only writing for a teacher but also for your friends. Ayse said, “I think sticky notes make it more enjoyable when giving feedback to other group’s writing.”*

To summarise, the participants commented that they received and gave peer feedback in the while and after writing stages, with most reporting that they found it useful and motivating.

Peer emotional support

The theme ‘peer emotional support’ was created inductively from grouping the following three sub-themes: 1) motivation, 2) self-confidence and support and co-operation. Table 3.31 shows the overview of the sub-themes and definitions within this theme.

Table 3.31 Overview of the sub-themes and definitions within the theme of peer emotional support

Theme	Sub-themes	Definitions
Peer emotional support	Motivation	This sub-theme refers to the participants’ comments about finding motivation from their peers’ support during the activity.
	Self- confidence	This sub-theme pertains to the participants’ comments about gaining self-confidence through their peers’ support during the activity.
	Support and co-operation	This sub-theme is regarding the participants’ comments about the importance of support and co-operation in their culture.

The third emerging theme in the analysis of the focus group discussion transcript was peer emotional support and most of the participants reported that they got motivated and encouraged to write in English through this.

Table 3.32 Number of participants who commented on peer emotional support

Peer emotional support	Number of participants who commented
Motivation	4
Self-confidence	3
Support and co-operation	3

Regarding motivation, Su explained, “*When it comes to writing in English, I am not confident because I think I have a lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Also, writing in English individually is not the same as writing in my mother tongue individually. It seems to be difficult for me. However, in collaborative writing activities,*

I have noticed that my friends gave me self-confidence to write in English... It's hard to explain this [feeling] but you feel that you can write in English when your friends are with you."

In regard to gaining self-confidence through peer support, Burak commented that receiving this during the writing activity enabled him to believe he could overcome the obstacles of writing in English.

Burak said, *"If we had written the same story individually, we couldn't have written better than our present story because each of us has strengths in different areas of English.... For example, I'm good at vocabulary, Mert is good at editing and Cem is good at generating ideas... When we all combine them, we could write it without feeling that we're going to become unsuccessful. I believe that many hands make light work and the feeling of friends' support makes you believe that you can overcome all the obstacles of writing in English."*

Concerning support and co-operation within the Turkish culture, Mert said, *".....in 2011, when the catastrophic earthquake hit Van [a city in Turkey], most of the people tried to find ways to help the locals there. Some people offered accommodation and some sent food and clothes. Even some people volunteered to help the search and rescue team.These [support and cooperation] traits aren't foreign to us. Therefore, when it comes to learning, we should get support from our friends... I believe most of my classmates think they cannot write but if their friends support them, they could somehow make sentences in English..."*

In short, most of the participants said they got motivated by their peers' support and some of them commented that they gained self-confidence through this during the activity. Some of the participants also highlighted the importance of support and co-operation in their culture.

Conclusion

To conclude, the nature of peer collaboration in the context of online creative writing was characterised based on participants' self-reflections from the discussion transcript within these three following themes; 1) peer instruction, 2) peer feedback, 3) peer emotional support. The table below summarises the findings of peer collaboration in the context of online creative writing.

3.33 Summary of the findings of the nature of peer collaboration in the context of creative writing

Themes	Sub-themes		
Peer instruction	Group members' views about peer instruction	Peer-teachers' views about peer instruction	
Peer feedback	Peer feedback in the while writing stage	Peer-feedback in the after writing stage	
Peer emotional support	Motivation	Self-confidence	Support and co-operation

As reflected by the participants, both groups' members decided to choose a peer- teacher among them in order to guide and instruct them during the writing activity. They also commented that they received and gave peer feedback in the while and after writing stages. Most of them found peer-feedback during both stages useful and motivating. Moreover, the majority stated they became motivated by their peers' support and some of them commented that they gained self-confidence by this during the activity. Some of the participants also highlighted the importance of support and co-operation in their culture.

3.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter, I have attempted to shape and inform the main study by carrying out a pilot study. The outcomes from this have allowed me to firm up the research questions for the main study, test the data collection method, focus group interviews, as well as deepening my understanding of qualitative data analysis through its practical application. In the main study, I intend to implement a-seven-week collaborative short story writing activity in the form of an FB group with the

involvement of six participants in two groups of three from a public high school in Turkey.

This thesis is a study about how to encourage EFL learners in a Turkish public high school to improve their writing skills in English with peers in an online short story writing exercise. The focus of the study is to explore EFL learners' interpretations of peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity and to investigate these learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity. The main study will be aimed at addressing two research questions: (1) "How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?", and (2) "What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?"

To this end, I plan to administer multiple methods (focus group interviews, online discussion threads and online-one-to-one chats) to probe the consistency of the findings from focus group discussion transcripts, online diary entries, and online discussion threads.

Timeline of the Research

Months	Project Goal
March - April 2014	Conducting main study
May - July 2014	Data analysis & documentation: Focus group interviews
August - Sept 2014	Data analysis & documentation: Online diary
Oct- Dec 2014	Data analysis & documentation: Online discussion threads
Jan – April 2015	Discussion & conclusion chapters
May- August 2015	Writing up: introduction, literature review & methodology
Sept- Dec 2015	Writing up: data analysis chapters, discussion & conclusion
January 2016	Submission

Appendix III

Guide for the writing activity (Main Study)

Session 2

Hi everyone, I'm posting the collaborative writing activity. Hope you'll enjoy it! Please let me know if you have any queries or anything which is not clear. Let's begin...

The girl in the picture below is Sally. I'd like to discuss together and write a short story about Sally. The six picture frames may help you to produce your story. It'd like to note that you don't have to describe all the events in the picture frames. This is just a guide for you to prepare yourselves for writing.

I look forward to meeting you on Thursday.

Good luck!

Hasan Selcuk



Appendix IV

Example focus group transcript

The excerpt below was taken from focus group discussion 1 transcript and translated from Turkish to English.

Hasan	I've noticed that both groups had some difficulties in the second session. Could you explain what really happened and how you overcome the difficulties?
Ali	Yes, my teacher, we had some difficulties in the second session but later we handled it quite well thanks to Selma. Even though I was present in our FB group on time for the session. I felt shy about initiating the discussion. Normally I'm not a shy person but when it comes to doing something with English, I get shy easily. Anyway, I waited for somebody who was confident and knowledgeable about what we're doing to guide us. I didn't want to ask you how we should do it. I knew that somebody in our group would start the discussion. I'm glad Selma initiated the group discussion. I think Selma not only started the group discussion, but also the collaboration for our writing exercise.
Selma	Actually, if the guys had listened to me earlier, we wouldn't have had difficulties in the second session. Before the first session, at school, I proposed to have a short meeting with the guys about what we should do with our second session but the guys said they were both busy with other course subjects. They ignored my proposal. I'm still angry at them. In our session, obviously we had some difficulties to start the discussion because we were like fish out of water. We absolutely had no idea about what we are going to do. Attila created a group message in FB and we were discussing there how should we start and we were panicking because you were waiting there to see us working. I came up with some ideas about how we should write our short story through your guiding picture frames. I shared my ideas in our discussion group in FB so that you would see them. Actually, there was preparation going on behind the curtains and I was the one who first acted on the stage.
Attila	My teacher, we had a maths exam. We had to study that. That's why, we couldn't meet Selma.
Selma	You could have spared 10 minute of yours, couldn't you?
Hasan	Okay guys let's leave that event behind. Please all of you, focus on our discussion. As I understood, Selma started the group discussion and after that you managed to start writing for your story. Am I right?
Attila	Yes, my teacher, Selma was very helpful to us. Actually Ali and me, both of us wanted Selma to lead us during the writing activity. Generally, our English teacher told us how we should write and how much we should write. As

	Selma said, we were like fish out of water because it was our first time to undertake such writing activity.
Ali	By the end of the second session, I asked her to be our group leader. I know that Selma's English is better than mine and therefore, I proposed her to be our group's head.
Attila	I agree with Ali. Selma's English exam results was very high. She knows English quite well. I agreed that Selma should be our group leader.
Deniz	At the beginning of a session, I felt the need of a teacher. Generally, our English teacher tells us what we should do. In this exercise, as I've seen, we're expected to undertake the exercise in a group without a teacher. However, in the second session, I couldn't get involved much because there was nobody to tell me what exactly I was supposed to do. I saw Nila was making interesting suggestions for our story. She also seemed to be helpful to me and I proposed her to be the teacher of our group.
Hasan	That's very interesting. Thanks for sharing with us Deniz. I've just noticed that you wanted Nila to be the teacher of your group but not the group leader. I wonder why you preferred to say a teacher rather than a group leader.
Deniz	Well, my teacher, my understanding is that a group leader leads the group. I mean conducting a discussion in the group. However, a teacher teaches something. I wanted Nila to be my teacher so that she could teach me how to write better in English as well as undertaking this writing exercise.
Hasan	Thank you Deniz. Gonca, you wanted to say something.
Gonca	By the end of the second session, I wanted Nila to be our group leader and of course our group's teacher as Deniz said because based on my experience so far, I think in collaborative activities somebody who is more confident and knowledgeable should conduct the group discussions and make decisions for the group. However, if my English teacher or you led the group, obviously, I would depend on your leading and guidance. But in such student-centred and student-led writing activity, my understanding of collaboration involves a group leader and group partners. What I believe is that without a group leader, I find it not very effective to maintain collaboration in such writing activity.
Hasan	So Nila, how did you reply your group partners' offer? Were you willing to be a group leader?

Nila	<p>Of course I accepted their offer. I'm very happy to be helping out two of my best friends. I was like Selma. I was the brave one to start the discussion. Let me tell you what we were doing after we joined our FB group and greeted with you and each other. As you might remember we stopped chatting for a while. To be honest with you. I was chatting together with the girls about how should we start the discussion in our WhatsApp message group. The girls told me that I should first start the discussion. Actually, our main problem was how to address each other in the discussion and how we should discuss. As it was our first time to do such a writing activity, we were a bit shy to initiate the discussion. I think the girls know that I am the bravest one in our group. That's why they chose me to write something on the discussion board first.</p>
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Appendix V

Abbreviations of codes for focus group discussion transcripts

How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?	
Letters	Codes
KV	Group leaders make decisions
AT	Group leaders allocate tasks
KA	Group leaders explain vocabulary
GA	Group leaders explain grammar
BA	Group leaders show how to make sentences in English with linking words
GHA	Group leaders show how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources
TE	Giving praise
MS	Saying motivational phrases
TAS	Receiving praise
MSA	Receiving motivational phrases
IH	Feeling comfortable with each other
GK	Informal discussions
MI	Humour
DAV	Receiving feedback from group leaders
DVG	Giving feedback as a group leader
GADV	All three group partners give feedback on a draft of writing
GADV	All three group partners give feedback to other group's final draft of writing

What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?	
Letters	Codes
KVY	Group leaders' decision making to facilitate the pre-writing stage of collaborative writing
DIL	Group leaders are encouraged to do linguistic search from online sources or books
GOZ	Group partners gain self-confidence in writing in English
GORL	Group partners develop learning from group leaders
TASM	Receiving praise is motivational for writing in English
MSAOZ	Receiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence towards writing in English
IHA	Feeling comfortable reduces apprehension towards writing in English
IHY	Feeling comfortable enables to reveal writing-related problems
MIA	Humour reduces apprehension towards writing in English
GDO	Group leaders' feedback is instructional
GDM	Group leaders' feedback increases motivation towards writing in English
GADOZ	Giving feedback all together increases self-confidence towards writing in English
GADKD	Giving feedback all together enables participants to gain self-correction technique

Appendix VI

Example online discussion threads

This following discussion threads were taken from group B's (Ali, Attila & Selma) third session in the collaborative short story writing exercise in Facebook discussion group.

Thread number	
1	Selma: Hi everybody! I'm here.
2	Ali: Hi Selma. I'm now online, ready to do the exercise.
3	Attila: Hi Selma and Ali. Good to see you here.
4	Hasan: Hi guys. I'm also here. Please try to do your best to undertake the writing exercise by working together. I'll be here. You can also write to me if you need help.
5	Selma: Hi, my teacher. Don't worry. I'm the group leader and the teacher of the group now. Everything is under control!
6	Ali: Hi my teacher. We trust Selma. Don't worry.
7	Attila: Hi my teacher. I agree with my friends. We'll do this exercise under the leadership of Selma.
8	Selma: Okay. Now we're starting our writing exercise. You'll do exactly what I'll tell you to do. Otherwise we won't complete this exercise. Is that okay?
9	Ali: Okay Selma.
10	Attila: Okay Selma. Let's do it.
11	Selma: Very good! Now I've divided the picture frames into three. Attila, you're describing the first two pictures.
12	Selma: Ali, you're describing the third and the fourth pictures, and I'll describe the last two ones.
13	Selma: You don't have to describe everything literally in the pictures. You can also add or remove the events in the pictures.
14	Selma: I'll give you 15 minutes. Please do your best. I'll help you develop your writing later. If you have any questions in the middle, do ask me. All okay?
15	Attila: Okay clear Selma. I'm starting now.
16	Ali: Selma, I'm not very good at writing in English. Please help me.
17	Selma: Ali, come on! Scribble something even though it was the worst English sentence ever. I'll help you.
18	Ali: Okay, I'll try my best.
19	Selma: Well done! Ali. Let's start guys!
20	Ali: Selma, are you there?
21	Selma: Yes, I'm here Ali. What is the problem?
22	Ali: I can't write it.
23	Selma: Ali, I know you're going to write it. Keep trying!
24	Attila: Come on Ali, you'll do it.

25	Ali: Thanks guys. Okay trying now.
26	Ali: Can you tell me how to say: Sally bu resminde hizli kosuyor [Sally is running fast in this picture].
27	Attila: Which tense are you going to use?
28	Ali: I think the continuous.
29	Selma: Well, in the continuous tense, you first use subject and then am/is/are and then a very with +ing.
30	Ali: Ok thanks. "This picture Sally is running fast." Is this correct?
31	Selma: Well done! Ali ☺
32	Attila: Aren't we supposed to write the story in the past tense?
33	Selma: True. You're right Attila.
34	Selma: Ali, we'll write our story in the past tense. Can you please change your sentence into the past? Also don't include the phrase 'in this picture' because you're telling a story. You're not showing the pictures to the reader.
35	Ali: Ok. I'm doing now. What is the past form of run?
36	Selma: ran
37	Ali: Ok. read this. Sally, entered home and phone rang. Weather was rainy. She ran fast. She didn't see cat. She hit cat and felt on cat.
38	Selma: Very good! You're getting there. Add one or two sentences more Ali.
39	Ali: Okay Selma. I'm very happy now. I'm writing in English.
40	Selma: Attila. Have you finished?
41	Attila: Yeah almost done, just give me two more minutes.
42	Selma: I'm posting my writing then. Here is mine. Sally fell down on the group with her cat. Sally stood up and answered the phone. Her cat's name was Boncuk. Boncuk was an angry cat. It scratched Sally while she was talking with her boss on the phone. Sally screamed a lot. She was running up and down in the room. Her Iphone's earpods tangled around Sally's legs and she fell down again. Her boss was angry and he was shouting at Sally. Sally was in panic.
43	Attila: Okay I'm done! Sally woke up at 7 am as usual. Sally was businesswoman. She was fit because she was running everyday. Sally had her breakfast. She ate apple drank mint tea. She drank water too. She went out for running. It was sunny morning. The birds were singing and the sun was shining. The weather became cold and windy and it rained. Sally ran home quickly.
44	Selma: Thank you. Attila.
45	Selma: Ali, please post your writing.

46	Ali: Ok. Here it is.
	Sally, entered home. She was wet. Weather was rainy. Phone rang. She ran fast. She didn't see cat. She hit cat and felt on cat. Cat died. Sally cried and called ambulans.
47	Selma: It's funny Ali. Why did the cat now?
48	Ali: I like dogs. I want Sally to have a dog.
49	Selma: Okay Ali, I'll think about that. Let's leave this later. Now I'm checking your writings.
50	<p>Selma: Attila, you have a few mistakes. Check your writing. You always put a/an and the.</p> <p>Sally woke up at 7 am as usual. Sally was a businesswoman. She was a fit woman because she was running everyday. Sally had her breakfast. She ate an apple drank mint tea. She drank water too. She went for running. It was a sunny morning. The birds were singing and the sun was shining. Suddenly, the weather became cold and windy and it rained. Sally ran home quickly.</p>
51	<p>Selma: I'm sending you a link. Please check out this later to understand the articles. It explains in Turkish.</p> <p>http://www.dersimizingilizce.com/ingilizce-articles-a-an-the.html</p>
52	Attila: Oh great. Thank you. I'll have a look at this after this session.
53	Selma: Ali I have read your writing. Please check it.
54	<p>Selma:</p> <p>Sally, entered her home. She became wet outside because the weather was rainy. The phone rang. She ran fast. She didn't see the cat and stepped on the cat's tail and fell down on the ground.</p>
55	Selma: Ali, the past form of fall is fell. You had better use –'because', 'and', 'but', or 'so' to merge two sentences otherwise it becomes boring to read.
56	Selma: You said: "She was wet. The weather was rainy" Well I changed it a little bit by merging the sentence with 'because'. Did you understand it? Ali.
57	Ali: I know this but it's hard to write like you do. By the way, why did you change was to became?
58	Selma: It's a good question because in Turkish become means 'haline gelmek' which means she was dry earlier and she became wet because of the weather.
59	Ali: Ok. I got it now.
60	Selma: By the way, I deleted your last two sentences. I think the cat shouldn't die now. It will affect my writing as well. We'll think about it later. Also you should learn how to use a, an, the. Check out the link, I sent to Attila.
61	Ali. Ok. No problem. You can delete these sentences. Ok. I'll check it out.
62	Selma: I'm quickly combining our writings.

63	Attila: You're a great group leader Selma. Thank you!
64	<p>Selma:</p> <p>Sally woke up at 7 am as usual. Sally was a businesswoman. She was a fit woman because she was running everyday. Sally had her breakfast. She ate an apple drank mint tea. She drank water too. She went for running. It was a sunny morning. The birds were singing and the sun was shining. Suddenly, the weather became cold and windy and it rained. Sally ran home quickly. Sally, entered her home. She became wet outside because the weather was rainy. The phone rang. She ran fast. She didn't see her cat and stepped on the cat's tail and fell down on the ground. Sally stood up and answered the phone. Her cat's name was Boncuk. Boncuk was an angry cat. It scratched Sally's face while she was talking with her boss on the phone. Sally screamed a lot. She was running up and down in the room. Her Iphone's earpods tangled around Sally's legs and she fell down again. Her boss was angry and he was shouting at Sally. Sally was in panic.</p>
65	Selma: Please read combined pieces of our story guys.
66	Selma: How did you find that?
67	Attila: That's really good! I like it.
68	Ali: Me too. This is great.
69	Ali: What are we going to do next week?
70	Selma: I haven't decided yet. But I think we should describe Sally.
71	Selma: the reader might be interested in who Sally is. We should portray her physical and characteristic features of Sally.
73	Attila: I think we should also tell her profession and hobbies or like/dislikes.
74	Selma: Excellent! We'll include these as well.
75	Selma: We have plenty of things to do.
76	Selma: However, we cannot do everything today.
77	Ali: You're right Selma.
78	Ali: I look forward to next week's session.
79	Attila: You should teach us some grammar here as well.
80	Selma: Okay guys. I'll help you with your writings and show you how to write better.
81	Selma: Our today's session is over now.
82	Selma: My teacher, we have completed our task now. We're leaving now. Do you want to add something?
83	Hasan: Well done! Three of you did a great job.
84	Hasan: You may sign out now.
85	Attila: Thank you. Bye my teacher.
86	Attila: Bye Selma and Ali.
87	Selma: I'm glad to hear that you liked our session.

88	Selma: Many thanks my teacher. Bye for now.
89	Selma: Bye Ali and Attila.
90	Selma: Both of you, my assignment is to study the use of a, an and the.
91	Selma: I don't want to see any mistakes on these in the next week.
92	Ali: Okay Selma. We'll study these.
93	Ali: Bye my teacher and my friends.
94	Attila: Okay. We'll study them. Bye.

Appendix VII

Abbreviations of codes for online discussion threads

How do EFL learners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?	
Letters	Codes
KV	Group leaders make decisions
AT	Group leaders allocate tasks
KA	Group leaders explain vocabulary
GA	Group leaders explain grammar
BA	Group leaders show how to make sentences in English with linking words
GHA	Group leaders show how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources
TE	Giving praise
MS	Saying motivational phrases
TAS	Receiving praise
MSA	Receiving motivational phrases
IH	Feeling comfortable with each other
GK	Informal discussions
MI	Humour
DAV	Receiving feedback from group leaders
DVG	Giving feedback as a group leader
GODV	All three group partners give feedback on a draft of writing
GODVF	All three group partners give feedback to other group's final draft of writing

Appendix VIII

Example online one-to-one chat threads

This online one-to-one chat was between me, the researcher and Nila (group A's partner and leader) after session 9 in the writing activity on 3 May 2014. We had a chat for 15 minutes in Facebook private message.

Thread number	
1	Hasan: Hi Nila, can we chat now?
2	Nila: Hi my teacher, yes of course.
3	Hasan: Before we start, I must say Well done! You and you friends completed the writing exercise on time.
4	Nila: Thank you ☺ We did our best.
5	Nila: I wish we could do this writing exercise again.
6	Hasan: I'm glad to hear that you enjoyed this writing exercise. Hope you will do such writing exercises in your teacher's lesson.
7	Nila: Definitely! I was lots of fun. I hope so.
8	Hasan: In our previous chats, you mentioned many times that you couldn't benefit from Deniz and Gonca in terms of English or writing in English.
9	Hasan: We're coming towards the end of the writing activity.
10	Hasan: I wonder if you still think that when working with your friends, you don't learn new things in English or this working together facilitate your writing development in English.
11	Nila: Well let me answer your question this way.
12	Nila: My understanding of learning is that somebody has to be more knowledgeable than you so that you can learn something.
13	Nila: I never want to say this to my friend but it's obvious that my English knowledge is better than the girls [Gonca and Deniz].
14	Nila: I must say, I learnt nothing in terms of English or writing in English from my group partners during this writing exercise.
15	Hasan: Okay but you have had 8 sessions with your friends so far. Haven't you learnt something which facilitated your English or writing in English?
16	Nila: Not directly
17	Hasan: Can you please open up a bit?
18	Nila: I mean if we didn't work hard, I wouldn't notice that I could also learn something individually.
19	Hasan: Well I remember you just said that your understanding of learning is that somebody who is more knowledgeable should teach you something.
20	Hasan: Did I misunderstood what you said?
21	Nila: No, you understood it correctly.
22	Nila: I still believe that somebody who is more knowledgeable like my teacher of English or private tutor should teach me something so that I could learn something.

23	Nila: However, previously, I had a thought that I knew everything about the use of ‘when’ and ‘while’. However,
24	Nila: in this writing exercise, I have learnt that my knowledge of simple continuous tense was limited to what my teacher or private tutor had taught me so far.
25	Nila: When I was working with the girls, they were asking my opinion if they had written was correct or asked for further explanations on my feedback to their writing.
26	Nila: Deniz used one sentence in with ‘when’. Both sentences before and after when was the simple past tense.
27	Nila: I told her that it was wrong. However, Deniz said that she was right.
28	Nila: Both our teacher of English and my private tutor taught me that after ‘when’ use the simple past tense and use the simple past continuous tense for the other sentence.
29	Nila: For the use of ‘while’ in a sentence, use the past continuous after while and use the past tense for the other sentence.
30	Nila: To give an example, “when my phone rang, I was taking a shower.” And “while I was taking a shower, my phone rang.”
31	Hasan: What was Deniz’s sentence? Do you remember that?
32	Nila: It was something like. “When Sally entered her house, she answered the phone.”
33	Nila: I checked the use of when and while in my grammar book and also checked it in google. I found out that we could use past tense both before and after ‘when’.
34	Hasan: So what did you say to Deniz?
35	Nila: After checking it out from a grammar book and from Google, I told her that there is such a use.
36	Nila: I felt myself bad because I didn’t know that. I’m a the group leader and Deniz and Gonca respect me because I know better than them.
37	Nila: I confess that my grammar book and Google were all open in front of me during the writing exercise.
38	Hasan: Good. So you noticed that you could also learn from your grammar book or google.
39	Nila: Yes but on a condition that your teacher should teach you the basic knowledge then you can develop it individually.
40	Nila: I need to leave now. My mother is calling me for dinner. Can we end the chat now?
41	Hasan: Sure no problem. Thank you for answering questions Nila. Enjoy your meal.
42	Nila: Thank you my teacher. Have a nice evening. Bye.
43	Hasan: Bye.

Appendix IX

Abbreviations of coding for online one-to-one chat threads

What are EFL learners' perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?	
Letters	Codes
KVY	Group leaders' decision making to facilitate the pre-writing stage of collaborative writing
GPA	Group leaders' decision making cause lack of group planning
DIL	Group leaders are encouraged to do linguistic search from online sources or books
LBO	Group leaders do not benefit from their group partners
GOZ	Group partners gain self-confidence in writing in English
GORL	Group partners develop learning from group leaders
TASM	Receiving praise is motivational for writing in English
MSAOZ	Receiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence towards writing in English
IHA	Feeling comfortable reduces apprehension towards writing in English
IHY	Feeling comfortable enables to reveal writing-related problems
MIA	Humour reduces apprehension towards writing in English
GDO	Group leaders' feedback is instructional
GDM	Group leaders' feedback increases motivation towards writing in English
GADOZ	Giving feedback all together increases self-confidence towards writing in English
GADKD	Giving feedback all together enables participants to gain self-correction technique

Appendix X

Final coding scheme

Codes	Categories	Concept	RQ1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders make decisionsGroup leaders allocate task	Leading in a group	Peer Leadership	How do EFL leaners interpret peer collaboration in an online short story writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders explain vocabularyGroup leaders explain grammarGroup leaders show how to make sentences in English with linking wordsGroup leaders show how to check linguistic mistakes through online sources	Teaching in a group		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Giving praiseSaying motivational phrasesReceiving praiseReceiving motivational phrases	Praise and motivational phrases	Peer Affective Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feeling comfortable with each otherInformal discussionsHumour	Camaraderie		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Receiving feedback from group leadersGiving feedback as a group leader	Group leaders' feedback	Peer Feedback	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All three group partners give feedback on a draft of writingAll three group partners give feedback to other group's final draft of writing	Collaborative feedback		

Codes	Categories	Concept	RQ2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders’ decision making to facilitate the pre-writing stage of collaborative writing processGroup leaders’ decision making cause lack of group planning	Leading in a group	Peer Leadership	What are EFL learners’ perceptions on the impact of peer collaboration on their writing development during the writing activity?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders are encouraged to do linguistic search from online sources or booksGroup leaders do not benefit from their group partnersGroup partners gain self-confidence in writing in EnglishGroup partners develop learning from group leaders	Teaching in a group		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Receiving praise is motivational for writing in EnglishReceiving motivational phrases increases self-confidence towards writing in English	Praise and motivational phrases	Peer Affective Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feeling comfortable reduces apprehension towards writing in EnglishFeeling comfortable enables to reveal writing-related problemsHumour reduces apprehension towards writing in English	Camaraderie		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group leaders’ feedback is instructionalGroup leaders’ feedback increases motivation towards writing in English	Group leaders’ feedback		

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giving feedback all together increases self-confidence towards writing in English• Giving feedback all together enables participants to gain self-correction technique	Collaborative feedback		
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Appendix XI

Ethical Approval Document

**Research Ethics
Office**

Research Ethics Officer
Room K0.58
The Strand
London WC2R 2LS
Tel 020 7848 1440
Email daniel.butcher@kcl.ac.uk
www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics



20th December 2012

Hasan Selcuk
Department of Education & Professional Studies

Dear Hasan,

REP(EM)/12/13-4 'An investigation into the Use of Online Collaborative Creative Writing Activities: Fostering Secondary Students' Engagement in EFL Writing Through Online Social Networking in Turkey'

I am pleased to inform you that the above application has been reviewed by the E&M Research Ethics Panel that FULL APPROVAL is now granted.

Please ensure that you follow all relevant guidance as laid out in the King's College London Guidelines on Good Practice in Academic Research (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/index.php?id=247>).

For your information ethical approval is granted until 22/11/14. If you need approval beyond this point you will need to apply for an extension to approval at least two weeks prior to this explaining why the extension is needed, (please note however that a full re-application will not be necessary unless the protocol has changed). You should also note that if your approval is for one year, you will not be sent a reminder when it is due to lapse.

Ethical approval is required to cover the duration of the research study, up to the conclusion of the research. The conclusion of the research is defined as the final date or event detailed in the study description section of your approved application form (usually the end of data collection when all work with human participants will have been completed), not the completion of data analysis or publication of the results. For projects that only involve the further analysis of pre-existing data, approval must cover any period during which the researcher will be accessing or evaluating individual sensitive and/or un-anonymised records. Note that after the point at which ethical approval for your study is no longer required due to the study being complete (as per the above definitions), you will still need to ensure all research data/records management and storage procedures agreed to as part of your application are adhered to and carried out accordingly.

If you do not start the project within three months of this letter please contact the Research Ethics Office.

Should you wish to make a modification to the project or request an extension to approval you will need approval for this and should follow the guidance relating to modifying approved applications: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/applications/modifications.aspx>

The circumstances where modification requests are required include the addition/removal of participant groups, additions/removal/changes to research methods, asking for additional data from

www.kcl.ac.uk

**Research Ethics
Office**

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London WC2R 2LS
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participants, extensions to the ethical approval period. Any proposed modifications should only be carried out once full approval for the modification request has been granted.

Any unforeseen ethical problems arising during the course of the project should be reported to the approving committee/panel. In the event of an untoward event or an adverse reaction a full report must be made to the Chair of the approving committee/review panel within one week of the incident.

Please would you also note that we may, for the purposes of audit, contact you from time to time to ascertain the status of your research.

If you have any query about any aspect of this ethical approval, please contact your panel/committee administrator in the first instance (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/research/support/ethics/contact.aspx>). We wish you every success with this work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Butcher', written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Butcher
Research Ethics Officer

Appendix XII

Student information sheet and consent form (Pilot Study)

REC Protocol Number: REP (EM) /12/12-4



YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of the Study: An investigation into the use of online collaborative creative writing activities: fostering secondary school students' engagement in EFL writing through online social networking in Turkey. (draft)

I would like to invite you to participate in my postgraduate research project. Please read this information leaflet before you decide. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me or your English teacher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This is what I want to do:

This research project aims to explore the use of online collaborative creative writing activities to foster secondary school student's engagement in English as a foreign language (EFL) in Turkey. Specifically, the project attempts to enable Turkish secondary school students to practice and enhance their EFL writing skills with online collaborative creative writing activities on Facebook. Therefore, your participation in this project will be valuable in understanding if online collaborative creative writing activities have benefits in secondary school students' EFL writing.

What I would like you to do:

- Attend four focus group discussions with other volunteer participants on the school premises within the school hours. The discussions will last approximately an hour and you will be audio-recorded.
- Attend the orientation of the study during one of the lunch breaks with your English teacher. The orientation aims to give you brief but useful information about the study you will participate. After the orientation, food and refreshments will be provided.
- Participate in a series of online collaborative creative writing activities in a 'secret group' on Facebook (FB) for 4 weeks.
- You can join the study any time anywhere either with your PC or if any, with your smartphone or any other electronic device which can access to internet.
- Each week, one collaborative writing activity will be posted on FB 'secret group' and you and two other group members whom you are grouped in the orientation will write a

couple of paragraphs (no more than 250 words) collaboratively in English and afterwards, within the same week, your group will be asked to give collaborative peer-feedback to other group's writing. Finally, I, the researcher will add on the feedback to student participants' collaborative peer-feedback.

- To do the activities, you are required to spend minimum 45 minutes each week with your group partners for writing and feedback activities on FB. Your English teacher will be there to supervise and guide you and s (he) will post the activities weekly and set the deadlines. I will also be there to assist you when you seek technical help or answers to your questions about the study.

Please ensure that you will not be assessed either with the answers you give during the discussions or the reflective reports you write weekly or the paragraphs you write on FB or the feedback you give with your group partners during the research study.

If you like more information, please contact the researcher, HasanSelcuk (hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk) Please be aware that if you decide to discontinue the study, you are still free to withdraw the research project without giving a reason until 20th December 2012 that the data collection process to be completed. If you should decide to withdraw from the study, you or one of your parent/carer can either e-mail or call me. My contact details are given below this letter.

To ensure your anonymity and confidentiality of the data you will provide on FB during the study, a 'secret group' created for you on FB. Apart from participants including volunteer student and teacher participants and me, nobody will find and see your names and posts in the group. The group will be kept private during and after the study. To find out more information for privacy options for the 'secret group', please check FB's website <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=200782296632450>. You can join this group for the study with your current FB account securely.

Please note that all the information will be used by me for academic purposes and always kept in an anonymous way so that nobody will be able to recognize you in the data. Electronic data including audio recordings, reflective journals will be kept in my PC encrypted and paper data including information sheet and consent forms will be locked in a file cabinet in my home and all will be deleted after 4 years beyond the completion of the research project.

If you agree, I need you to sign the form below.

Finally, if this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information.

Supervisors**Dr. Jane Jones**

Head of MFL Teacher Education

Department of Education and Professional Studies

King's College London, Franklin-Wilkins Building- Waterloo Bridge Wing,

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8WA UK

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Dr. Mary E. Webb

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Department of Education and Professional Studies

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E-mail: hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk

STUDENT CONSENT FORM



Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: An investigation into the use of online collaborative creative writing activities: Fostering secondary school students' engagement in EFL writing through online social networking in Turkey (draft)

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP (EM) /12/12-4

Dear Student,

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or the explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher (Hasan Selcuk) or your English teacher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

- *I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason until 10th of December 2012. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the point of publication or up until the point stated on the Information Sheet.* ☐
- *I consent to be audio recorded during the research study.* ☐
- *I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.* ☐

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Full name (in capitals):

Signed _____

Dat _____

Appendix XIII

Parent/ Carer Information sheet and consent form (Pilot Study)

REC Protocol Number: REP (EM) /12/12-4



YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: An investigation into the use of online collaborative creative writing activities: Fostering secondary school students' engagement in EFL writing through online social networking in Turkey (draft)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to ask for permission for your child to participate in my postgraduate research project. You should allow your child to participate only if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage him/her in any way. Before you decide whether to give permission, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your child's participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me or your child's English teacher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This is what I want to do.

This research project aims to explore the use of online collaborative creative writing activities to foster secondary school student's engagement in English as a foreign language (EFL) in Turkey. Specifically, the project attempts to enable Turkish secondary school students to practice and enhance their EFL writing skills through online collaborative creative writing activities on Facebook. Therefore, your child's participation in this project will be valuable in understanding if online collaborative creative writing activities have benefits in secondary school students' EFL writing

What I would like your child to do:

- Attend four focus group discussions, with other volunteer participants on the school premises within school hours. The discussions will last approximately an hour and your child will be audio-recorded.
- Attend the briefing to the study during one of the lunch breaks with his/her English teacher. The briefing is aimed at giving your child useful information about the study s(he) will participate in. Afterwards, refreshments will be provided.
- Participate in a series of online collaborative creative writing activities in a 'secret group' on Facebook (FB) for 4 weeks.
- Your child can join the study any time anywhere either with his/her PC or by using his/her smartphone or any other electronic device which can access the Internet.

- Each week, one collaborative writing activity will be posted on the FB ‘secret group’ and your child and two other group members chosen during the briefing will write a couple of paragraphs (no more than 250 words) collaboratively in English. Subsequently, within the same week, your child’s group will be asked to give collaborative peer-feedback to other group’s writing. Finally, your child’s English teacher will add his/her feedback to student participants’ collaborative peer-feedback.
- To perform the activities, your child is required to spend a minimum of 45 minutes each week with his/her group partners for writing and feedback activities on FB. Your child’s English teacher will be there to supervise and guide him/her and she/he will post the activities weekly as well as set the deadlines. I will also be there to assist your child when he/she seeks technical help or answers to questions about the study.

Please be assured that your child will not be assessed either with the answers s(he) gives during the discussions, the reflective reports s(he) writes weekly, the paragraphs s(he) writes on FB or the feedback s(he) gives along with his/her group partners during the research study.

If you would like further information, please contact the researcher, Hasan Selcuk (hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk) Please be aware that if your child wishes discontinue the study, he she is free to do so any time up until data collection completion on 20 December 2012. If your child should decide to withdraw from the study, either s(he) or you can e-mail or call me. My contact details are given at the end of this letter.

To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the data, your child will be provided access to a secret group FB. Only the participants, the English subject teachers and myself will be able to access the group and your child’s name along with his/her posts will be unavailable to anyone else. The group will be kept private during and after the study. To find out more information regarding privacy options for a ‘secret group’, please check FB’s website <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=200782296632450>. Your child can join this group for the study securely with his/her current FB account.

Please note that all the information will be used by me for academic purposes and always kept in an anonymous way so that nobody will be able to recognise your child in the data. Electronic data including audio recordings, reflective journals will be kept on my PC in an encrypted form and paper data including information sheet and consent forms will be locked in a filing cabinet at my home. In addition, all data will be deleted 4 years after the completion of the research project.

If you agree, I need you to sign the form below.

Finally, if your child does participate and you consider he/she has been harmed in any way, you can contact King’s College London using the details below for further advice and information.

Supervisors**Dr. Jane Jones**

Head of MFL Teacher Education

Department of Education and Professional Studies

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E-mail: hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk

PARENT/CARER CONSENT FORM



Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP (EM) /12/12-4

Title of Study: An investigation into the use of online collaborative creative writing activities: Fostering secondary school students' engagement in EFL writing through online social networking in Turkey (draft)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for considering allowing your child to participate in this research. The information sheet accompanying this consent form includes all the information relating to the project. However, if you have any questions arising from that, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher (Hasan Selcuk) before you decide whether to give consent. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time. Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify your child from any publications.

- *I understand that if my child and I decide at any time during the research that my child no longer wishes to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason until 10th December 2012. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the point of publication or up until the point stated on the Information Sheet.*
- *I consent my child to be audio recorded during the research study.* ☐
- *I consent to the processing of my child's personal information for the purposes explained to me.* ☐
- *I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.* ☐

Guardian's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to let my child _____ take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Please circle your relationship to the child named above:

Father Mother Guardian Other.....

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX XIV

Student information sheet and consent form (Main Study)

REC Protocol Number: REP (EM) /12/12-4

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET



Title of study: An investigation into the use of an online collaborative creative writing activity: Fostering Turkish high school students' engagement in EFL writing (draft)

I would like to invite you to participate in my postgraduate research project. Please read this information leaflet before you decide. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me or your English teacher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This is what I want to do:

This research project aims to investigate how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in a high school engage in the skill of writing in English through collaborative creative writing activities in a Facebook (FB) group. Therefore, your participation in this project will be valuable in understanding if collaborative creative writing activities in a FB group have benefits in high school students' writing development in English.

What I would like you to do:

- Participate in a collaborative creative writing activity in a 'secret group' on Facebook (FB) for seven weeks.
- Before you start the writing activity, you are required to form a group of three with other volunteer participants among your classmates.
- To do the writing activity, you are required to discuss and decide on the meeting dates and times with your group partners. You are required to arrange at least one meeting in a week and spend minimum 45 minutes for each session with your group partners in a FB group.
- You are required to discuss with your group partners in a FB group in a written way either in Turkish or English to produce writing in English collaboratively.
- You can join the meetings any time anywhere either with your PC or if any, with your smartphone or any other electronic device which can access to internet.
- Try to carry out the writing activity with your group partners. I will attend all your sessions and provide you assistance and guidance when you need it.
- Attend four focus group discussions within these seven weeks. The discussions will be conducted with other volunteer participants on the school premises within the school hours. The discussions will last approximately one hour and you will be audio- recorded.
- Attend one-to-one chats with me in FB after each meeting. We will only discuss your writing experiences in English regarding your meeting with your group partners. The chats will last approximately 10-15 minutes.

Please ensure that you will not be assessed either with the collaborative creative writing activity in a FB group or your written discussions when undertaking the activity in a FB group. Also you will not be assessed either with your answers in focus group discussions or one-to-one chats in a FB group.

If you like more information, please contact the researcher, Hasan Selcuk (hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk) Please be aware that if you decide to discontinue the study, you are still free to withdraw the research project without giving a reason until 4 June 2014 that the data collection process to be completed. If you should decide to withdraw from the study, you or one of your parent/carer can either e-mail or call me. My contact details are given below this letter.

To ensure your anonymity and confidentiality of the data you will provide on FB during the study, a 'secret group' created for you on FB. Apart from participants and me, nobody will find and see your names and posts in the group. The group will be kept private during and after the study. To find out more information for privacy options for the 'secret group', please check FB's website <https://www.facebook.com/help/412300192139228>. You can join this group for the study with your current FB account securely.

Please note that all the information will be used by me for academic purposes and always kept in an anonymous way so that nobody will be able to recognize you in the data. Electronic data including audio recordings, reflective journals will be kept in my PC encrypted and paper data including information sheet and consent forms will be locked in a file cabinet in my home and all will be deleted after 4 years beyond the completion of the research project.

If you agree, I need you to sign the form below.

Finally, if this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information.

Supervisors

Dr. Jane Jones

Head of MFL Teacher Education
Department of Education and Professional Studies
King's College London, Franklin-Wilkins Building- Waterloo Bridge Wing,
Franklin-Wilkins Building
Stamford Street, London SE1 8WA UK Tel:
44-(0) 207-848-3116
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Dr. Mary E. Webb

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Researcher

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Mobile: 44-(0)-7404844691 / **E-mail:** hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.



University of London

Title of study: An investigation into the use of an online collaborative creative writing activity: Fostering Turkish high school students' engagement in EFL writing (draft)

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP(EM)

/12/12-4

Dear Student,

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or the explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher (Hasan Selcuk) or your English teacher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

- I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason until 4 June 2014. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the point of publication or up until the ☐ point stated on the Information Sheet.
- I consent to be audio recorded for focus group discussions. ☐
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained ☐ to me.
- I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. ☐

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Full name (in capitals):

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix XV

Parent/carers information sheet and consent form (Main Study)

REC Protocol Number: REP(EM) /12/12-4

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET



Title of study: An investigation into the use of an online collaborative creative writing activity: Fostering Turkish high school students' engagement in EFL writing (draft)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to ask for permission for your child to participate in my postgraduate research project. You should allow your child to participate only if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage him/her in any way. Before you decide whether to give permission, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your child's participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me or your child's English teacher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This is what I want to do:

This research project aims to investigate how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in a high school engage in the skill of writing in English through collaborative creative writing activities in a Facebook group. Therefore, your child's participation in this project will be valuable in understanding if collaborative creative writing activities in a FB group have benefits in high school students' writing development in English.

What I would like your child to do:

- Participate in a collaborative creative writing activity in a 'secret group' on Facebook (FB) for seven weeks.
- Before your child starts the writing activity, he/she will form a group of three with other volunteer participants among your child's classmates.
- To do the writing activity, he/she will discuss and decide on the meeting dates and times with his/her group partners. He/she will arrange at least one meeting in a week and spend minimum 45 minutes for each session with his/her group partners in a FB group.
- Your child will discuss with his/her group partners in a FB group in a written way either in Turkish or English to produce a writing in English collaboratively.
- Your child can join the meetings any time anywhere either with his/her PC or if any, with his/her smartphone or any other electronic device which can access to internet.
- I will attend all the sessions in the writing activity and provide your child assistance and guidance when he/she needs.
- Attend four focus group discussions within these seven weeks. The discussions will be conducted with other volunteer participants on the school premises within the school hours. The discussions will last approximately one hour and your child will be audio-recorded.

- Attend one-to-one chats with me in FB after each meeting with his/her group partners. We will only discuss your child about his/her writing experiences in English regarding the meeting with your child's group partners. The chats will last approximately 10-15 minutes.

Please ensure that your child will not be assessed either with the answers s(he) gives during the discussions or the reflective reports s(he) writes weekly or the paragraphs s(he) writes on FB or the feedback s(he) gives with his/her group partners during the research study.

If you like more information, please contact the researcher, Hasan Selcuk (hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk) Please be aware that if your child needs to discontinue the study, your child is still free to withdraw the research project without giving a reason until 4 June 2014 that the data collection process to be completed. If your child should decide to withdraw from the study, either s(he) or you can either e-mail or call me. My contact details are given below this letter.

To ensure your child's anonymity and confidentiality of the data, your child will provide on FB during the study, a 'secret group' created for him/her on FB. Apart from participants including volunteer student and teacher participants and me, nobody will find and see your child's names and posts in the group. The group will be kept private during and after the study. To find out more information for privacy options for the 'secret group', please check FB's website <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=200782296632450>. Your child can join this group for the study with your current FB account securely.

Please note that all the information will be used by me for academic purposes and always kept in an anonymous way so that nobody will be able to recognize your child in the data. Electronic data including audio recordings, reflective journals will be kept in my PC encrypted and paper data including information sheet and consent forms will be locked in a file cabinet in my home and all will be deleted after 4 years beyond the completion of the research project.

If you agree, I need you to sign the form below.

Finally, if this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information.

Supervisors

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Dr. Mary E. Webb

Senior Lecturer IT and Education
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Researcher**Hasan Selcuk**

MPhil/PhD student

Department of Education and Professional Studies

King's College London, Franklin-Wilkins Building-Waterloo Bridge Wing,

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Stamford Street, London SE1 8WA UK

Mobile: 44-(0)-7404844691

E-mail: hasan.selcuk@kcl.ac.uk

PARENT/CARER CONSENT FORM

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.



University of London

Title of study: An investigation into the use of an online collaborative creative writing activity: Fostering Turkish high school students' engagement in EFL writing (draft)

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: *REP(EM)/12/12-4*

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for considering allowing your child to participate in this research. The information sheet accompanying this consent form includes all the information relating to the project. However, if you have any questions arising from that, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher (Hasan Selcuk) before you decide whether to give consent. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time. Please note that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify your child from any publications.

- I understand that if my child and I decide at any time during the research that my child no longer wishes to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason until 11th February 2013. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the point of publication or up until the point stated on the Information Sheet. ☐
- I consent my child to be audio recorded before and after the research study. ☐
- I consent to the processing of my child's personal information for the purposes explained to me. ☐
- I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. ☐

Guardian's Statement:

I _____
agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to let my
child _____ **take part in the**
study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the
project, and understand what the research study involves.

Please circle your relationship to the child named above:

Father Mother Guardian Other.....

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix XVI

Example collaborative writing activities from participants'

textbook Activity 1: Dialogue writing

C. Listen to the dialogue at the post office and complete the questions.

Sender : Hello, I'd like to send a parcel.
Clerk : Where (1)....., sir?
Sender : To the USA.
Clerk : By (2).....or (3)....., sir?
Sender : Which (4).....?
Clerk : Large package is cheaper by sea, and small package is cheaper by air.
Sender : I see. How (5).....?
Clerk : At least two weeks, sir.
Sender : Ok, I'll send it by air. How (6).....?
Clerk : Just a minute. I'll weigh and see... It's £90.
Sender : Here you are. Thank you.

D. How many ways of sending are possible at the post office? Do you think the sender's parcel is large or small? Discuss it with reasons.

E. Now, work in pairs and prepare a similiar dialogue as in activity C. Then, act it out.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines and a vertical red margin line on the left side. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Activity 2: Paragraph writing



E. Search the Net and find a natural disaster in the history of your country and write a paragraph about it considering the questions below. Then, swap your writing with your partner, check each other's writing and rearrange yours according to your partner's feedback.

- o Where did the event happen?
- o When did it happen?
- o What caused the disaster? (natural reasons / human error, etc)
- o How many people were killed because of the disaster?
- o How many people suffered from it?

Peer Correction Code

? : Meaning is not clear
 WO : Word Order
 WW : Wrong Word
 S : Spelling
 P : Punctuation
 G : Grammar



Activity 3: Preparing a poster

- F. Work in groups. Prepare a poster advertising an event about alternative energy resources. Then, write an announcement about the event (conference / meeting / briefing / seminar, etc.) related to your poster. Don't forget to put a slogan on your poster and to prepare an invitation card for the event.

